SPAWN®

ORIGINS COLLECTION • VOLUME 20

SPAWN®

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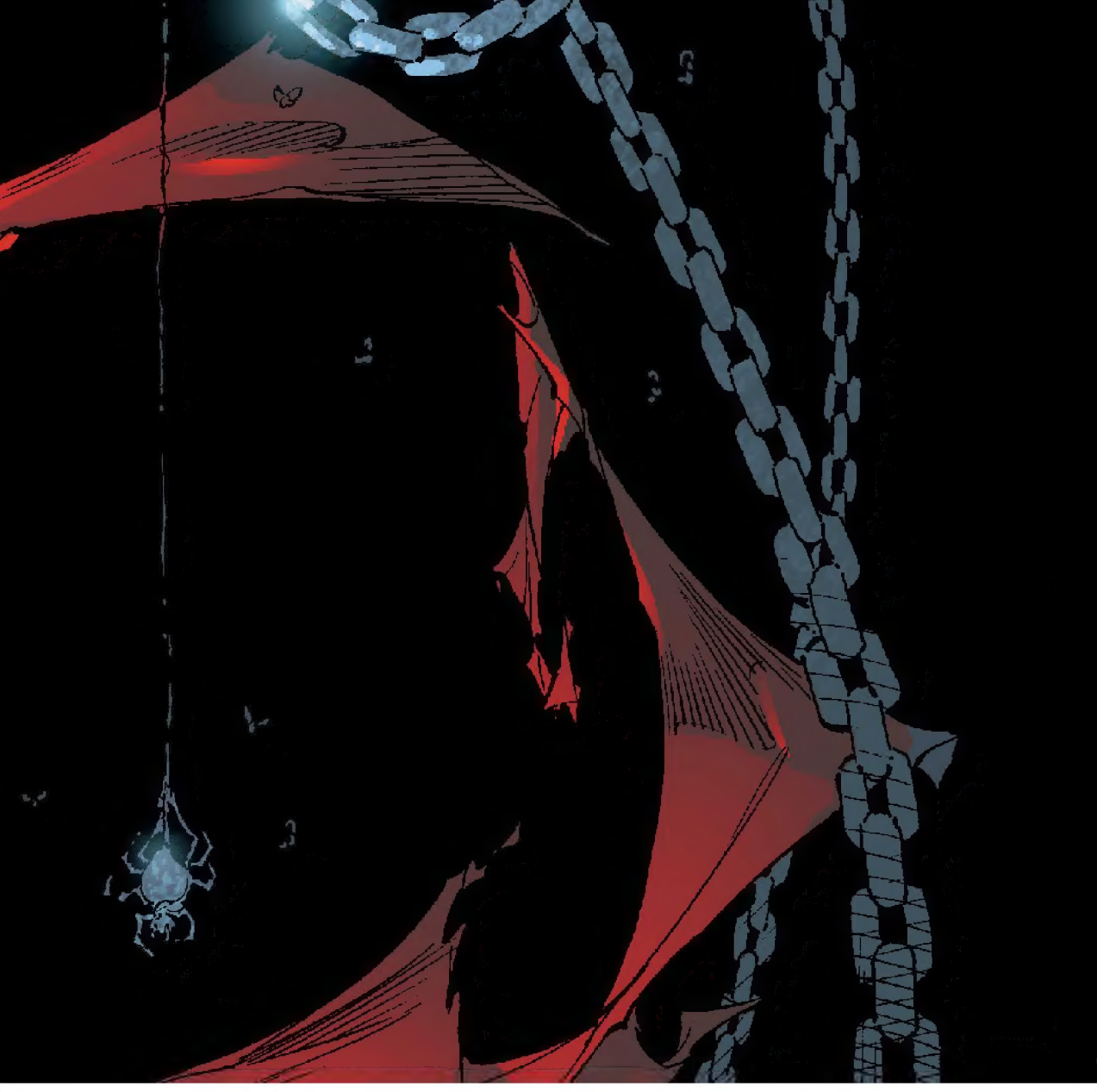

STORY TODD McFARLANE, BRIAN HOLGUIN

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ALLEN MARTINEZ, CRIME LAB STUDIOS

LETTERING TOM ORZECHOWSKI

COLOR DAN KEMP, BRIAN HABERLIN

COVERS GREG CAPULLO & TODD McFARLANE

TRADE PAPERBACK COVER CLAYTON CRAIN

"I think one of the appealing aspects of the (Spawn) character is that he gives readers another option to the obvious stereotypes of a lot of superheroes. He's not just a knockoff of Superman or Batman. He has other unique qualities and they're actually the things that the general public has trouble coming to grips with, which is that he's not a perfect, polished superhero and he doesn't, in truth, want to be a superhero. I think that following how this man is trying to push through this long-suffering curse of his is more interesting than the number of bank robberies or damsels in distress that he would save."

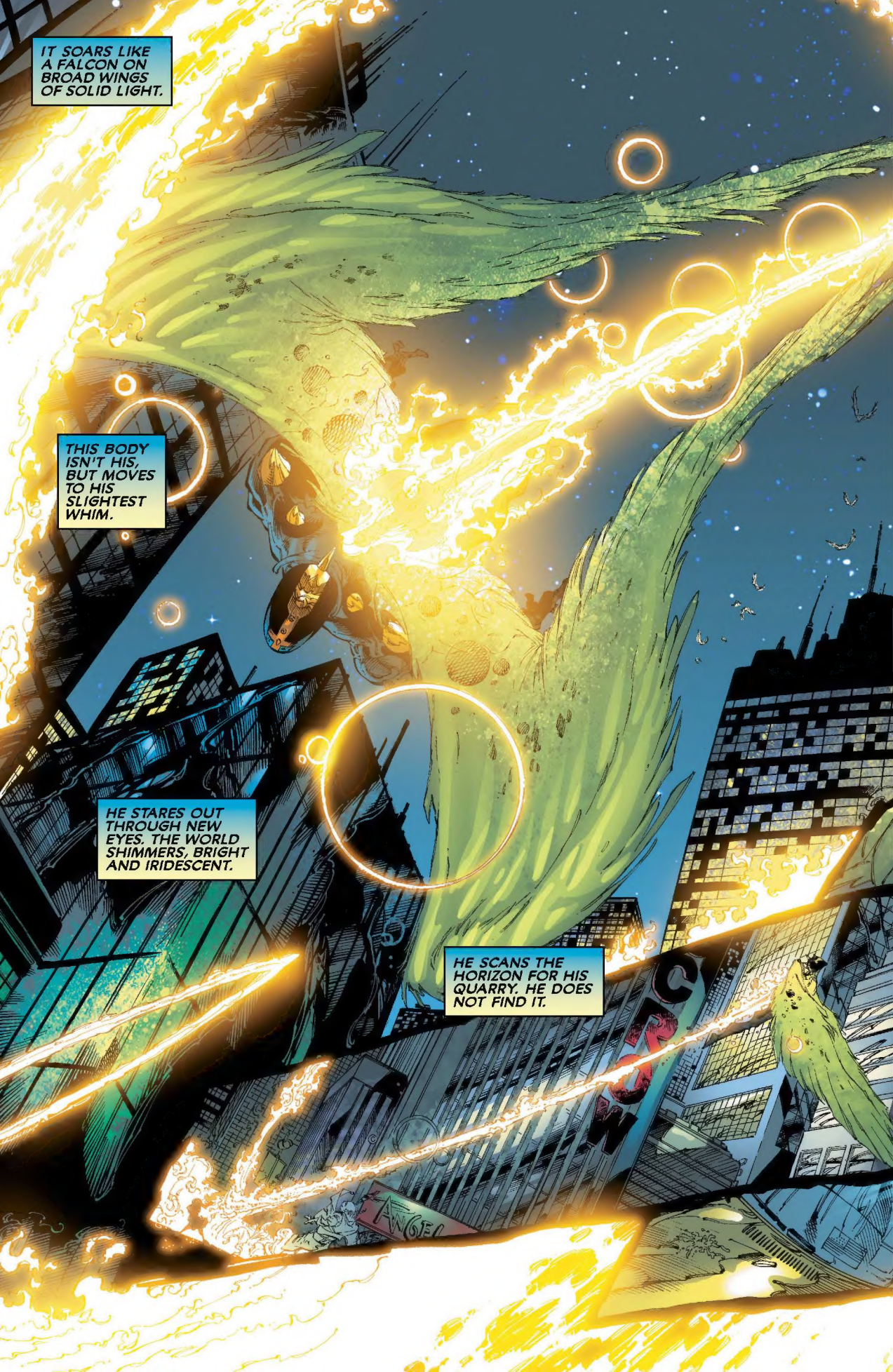
-Todd McFarlane
Spawn 10th Anniversary
Interview, Issue 117

"A SEASON IN HELL"

PART ONE

Spawn #117, cover

...BAFFLED. I DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER WORD...
...MEDIA'S DOWNSTAIRS, BARKING FOR ANSWERS. WE HAVE TO TELL THEM SOMETHING...
...WOUND WAS CLEAN. IT SHOULDN'T ACCOUNT FOR THIS KIND OF RESPONSE...
...HAD A WALLET ON HIM. FRANK SOMETHING. EDDIE FRANK...
HE'S GOT A HEARTBEAT, BUT IT'S ONLY ONCE EVERY MINUTE.
HIS EEG DOESN'T EVEN CHART. THE MIND'S SHUT DOWN.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S KEEPING HIM. HE SHOULD EITHER DIE OR WAKE UP.
AS ODD AS IT SOUNDS, I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER EXPLANATION.
IT'S LIKE HE'S JUST NOT IN THERE.
EDDIE FRANK'S SPIRIT IS ELSEWHERE.


IT SOARS LIKE A FALCON ON BROAD WINGS OF SOLID LIGHT.
THIS BODY ISN'T HIS, BUT MOVES TO HIS SLIGHTEST WHIM.
HE STARES OUT THROUGH NEW EYES. THE WORLD SHIMMERS, BRIGHT AND IRIDESCENT.
HE SCANS THE HORIZON FOR HIS QUARRY. HE DOES NOT FIND IT.

HE SPEAKS WITH A VOICE THAT ISN'T HIS, WORDS ECHOING WITH GLASSY HARMONICS.
WHERE?
WHERE HAS HE GONE?

TUNISIA.
GO AWAY. NOT YET.
I'M TRYING TO CHANGE THE WORLD, OLD MAN. BUT FIRST I HAVE TO ASK THE EARTH'S PERMISSION.
SPAWN, WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR HOURS.
ANY IDEA WHEN WE COULD EXPECT AN ANSWER?
THE PLANET OPERATES ON ITS OWN TIME. WE WAIT TILL WE GET A SIGN.
NOW BE STILL. I HAVE TO FOCUS.

A SIGN, HUH?
SPAWN...
SPAWN, LOOK OUT!

YOU!
YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME!
YOU DESTROYED WHAT I *LOVED*... I WILL *DESTROY* YOU!

FWOOOM!

POOR LITTLE LAMB.
I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD. IT'S BEEN IN ALL THE PAPERS. ABSOLUTELY TRAGIC.
WHAT IS IT WITH CHILDREN THESE DAYS? SO FILLED WITH ANGER AND RAGE. SOMETIMES I THINK THAT THE WHOLE WORLD HAS GONE MAD.
SHALL I READ THIS TO YOU? YES?
VERY WELL. AHEM
"ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A BOY WHO LOVED HIS FATHER VERY, VERY MUCH..."
$1.50
NEW YORK SUBURBS

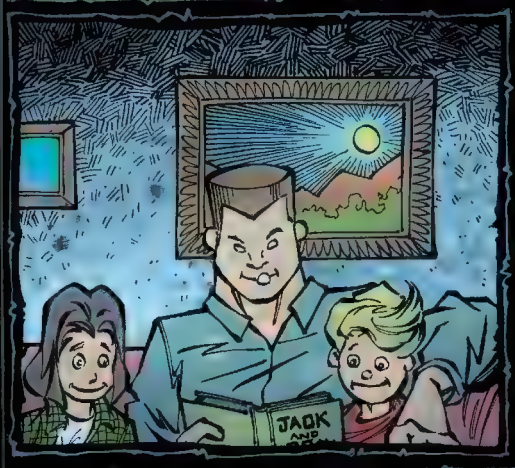
WHO SENT YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
VENGEANCE! VENGEANCE AND ABSOLUTION!

AAAARGH!
I WANT TO HURT YOU.
...THE WAY YOU HURT US!

THE BOY LIVED THERE WITH HIS FATHER AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NOT RICH, THEY WERE HAPPY. HUMBLE AND PROUD, THEY MADE A GOOD LIFE TOGETHER, JUST THE THREE OF THEM.

THEIR FATHER WAS A KING AMONG MEN. HONEST, WISE AND WELL RESPECTED BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

HE WAS STRONG AND BRAVE AND HE DOTED ON HIS SONS. HE TAUGHT THEM IN TURN TO BE STRONG, TO BE BRAVE, AND MOST OF ALL TO BE GOOD.



DAYS WERE FILLED WITH SUNSHINE AND ICE CREAM AND GAMES OF CATCH. NIGHTS WERE SPENT READING STORIES OR PLAYING GAMES.

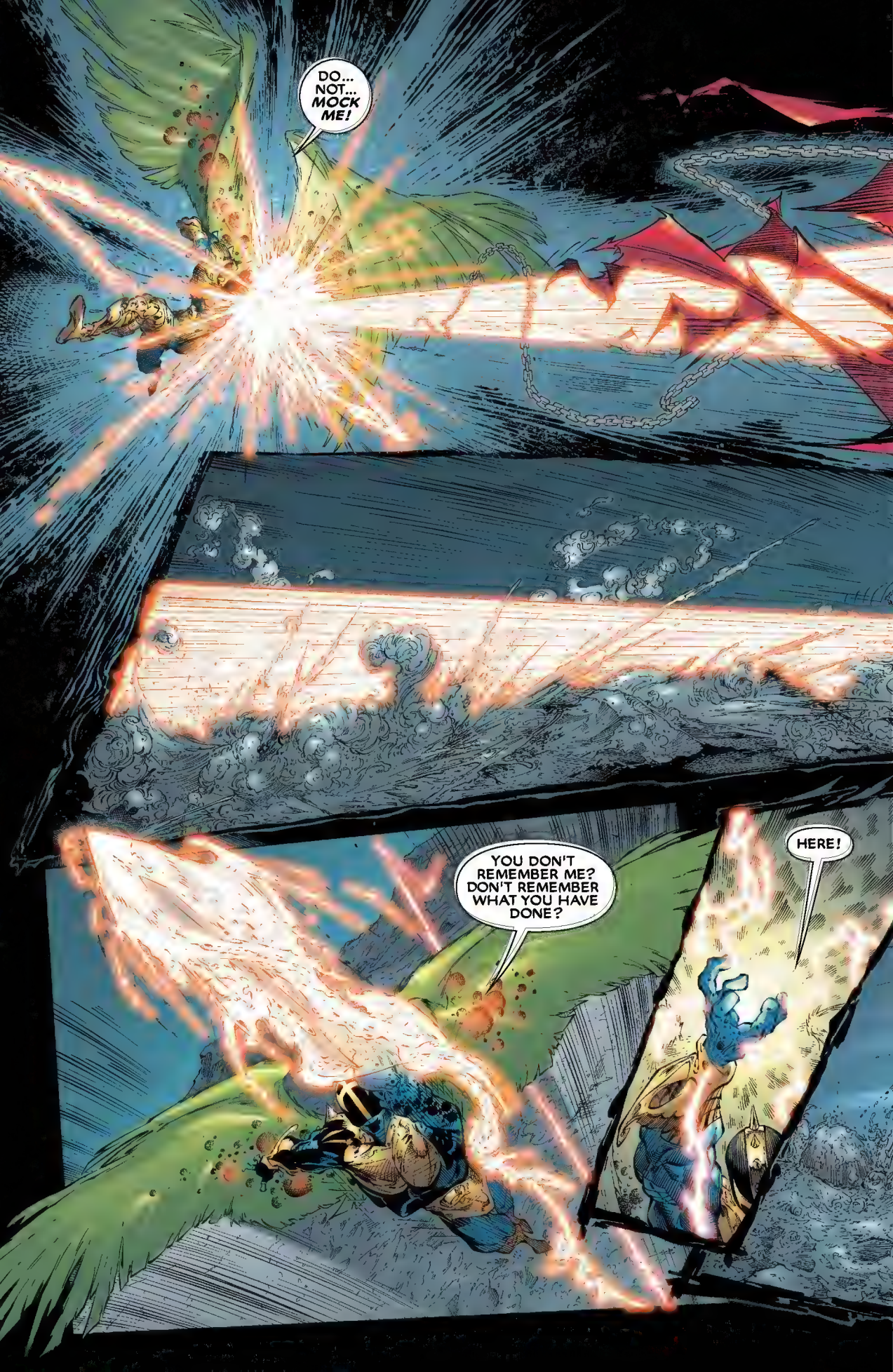
NO DOUBT THE FATHER COULD HAVE BEEN A GREAT MANY THINGS IN LIFE IF HE HAD WANTED, BUT HE CHOSE TO STAY IN THE QUIET LITTLE TOWN AND DEVOTE HIS LIFE TO HIS CHILDREN.

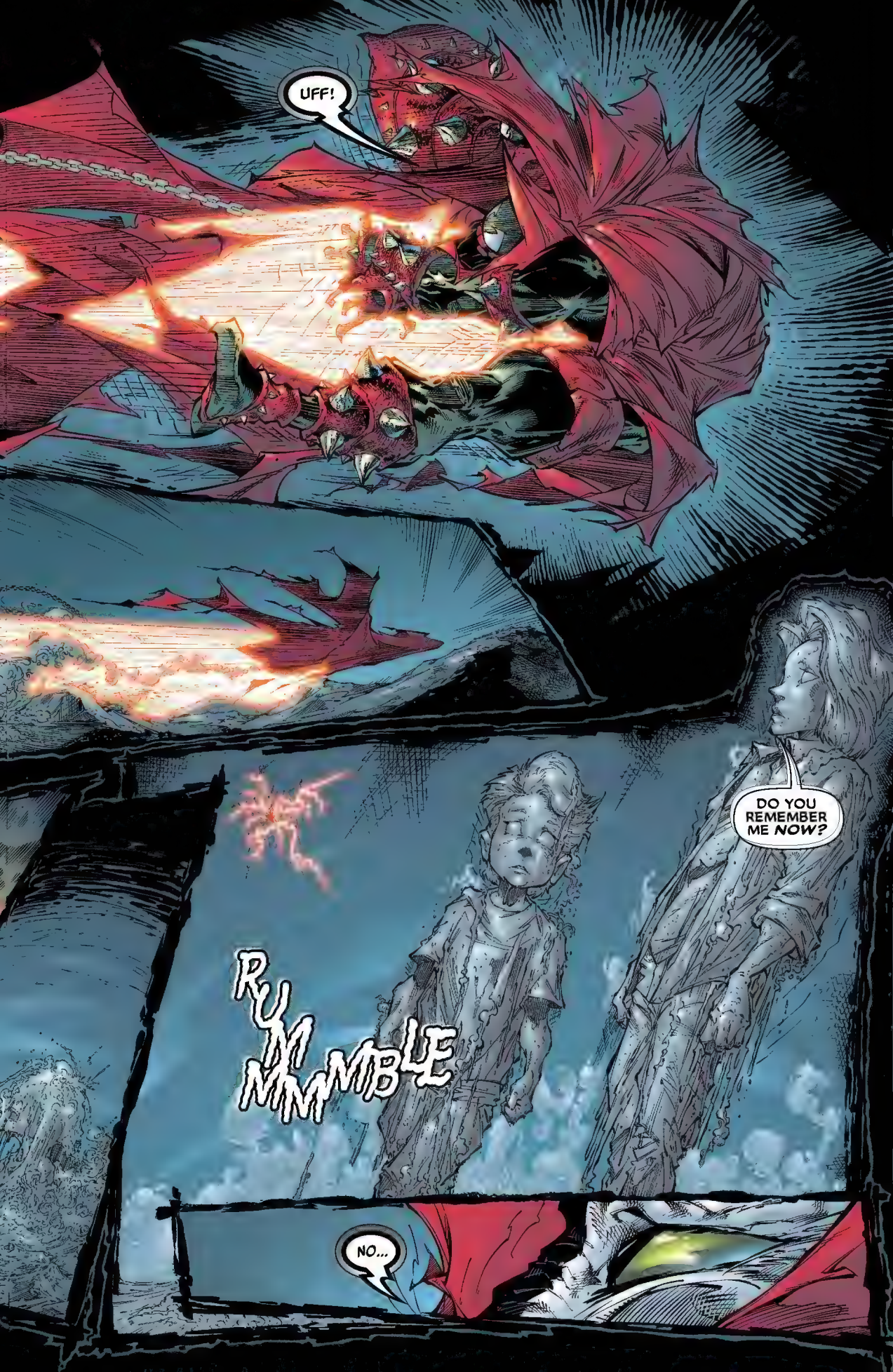
THAT'S HOW MUCH HE LOVED HIS SONS.

BUT ONE DAY A DARK CLOUD GATHERED IN THE DISTANCE, AND GREAT WICKEDNESS DESCENDED TO TEAR THE FAMILY APART. THE BOY COULD FEEL IT COMING, BUT HE COULD DO NOTHING TO STOP IT.

SOMETHING VERY BAD HAPPENED AND THE FATHER DIED.
YOU TORE MY WORLD APART! TELL ME WHY! I WANT ANSWERS!
WHAT A SHAME IT IS WHEN A GOOD MAN DIES BEFORE HIS TIME.
WYNN? IS THAT YOU IN THERE?
NO. NOT WYNN. THEN WHO?
WHAT GREAT DEEDS, WHAT WONDROUS ACHIEVEMENTS THE WORLD IS DENIED BY HIS LOSS.

But nothing can compare to the hole it left in the lives of his children.
It was as if the sun had gone out in the heavens, as if God himself had vanished from his throne.
I want you to *suffer* like I suffered. I want you to know my *pain*.
And, like a storybook prince, the son could never rest until he avenged his beloved father.
Know your pain? I don't even know who the hell you are.


DO... NOT... MOCK ME!
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME? DON'T REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE DONE?
HERE!

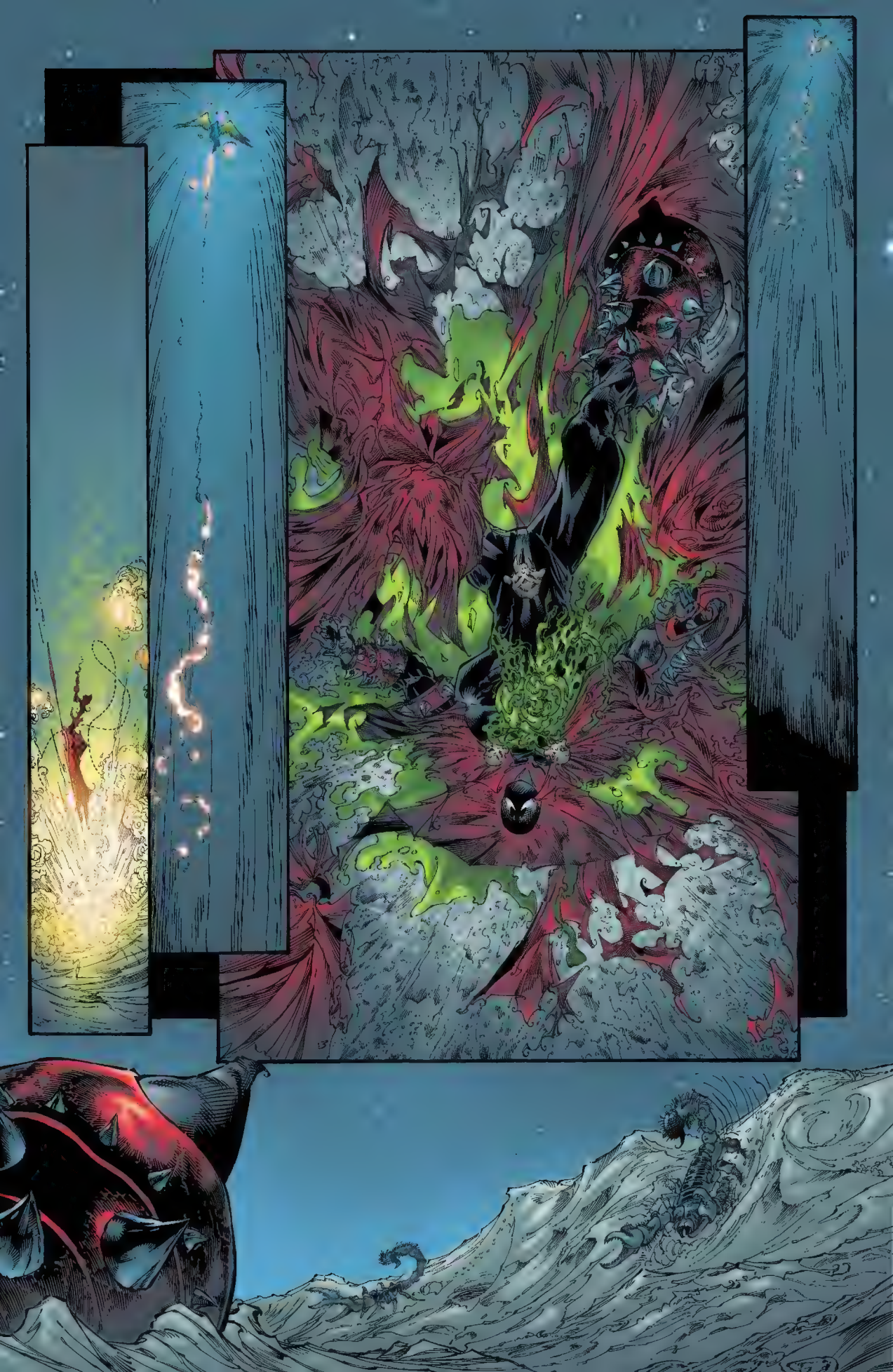

UFF!
DO YOU REMEMBER ME NOW?
RUMMMMBLE
NO...

TWO INNOCENT BOYS WHO TOOK YOU IN, WHO TRUSTED YOU--
AND YOU--YOU DESTROYED THEM! SMASHED THEIR WORLD TO BITS!
THAT'S NOT TRUE... I TRIED... I TRIED TO...
HEEAAAH!
OF COURSE... IT WAS ALL A LIE.

DEEP DOWN, WHERE YOU'RE AFRAID TO LOOK, YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT. YOUR FATHER WAS NO HERO.
HE WAS A DRUNKEN BRUTE WHO BEAT HIS CHILDREN BECAUSE IT MADE HIM FEEL SOME SMALL MEASURE OF POWER IN A WORLD THAT OVERWHELMED HIM.
HE WAS A CRUEL AND IGNORANT MAN THAT THE WORLD IS WELL RID OF.
THE "DARK THING" HAD TRIED TO HELP YOU.
BUT HIS GOOD INTENTIONS WEREN'T ENOUGH.
WERE THEY, EDDIE?
AS I SAID, IT IS A TRAGIC STORY. ONE YOU COULDN'T BEAR TO BELIEVE.
NOOOO....
SO WHEN A CHARMING STRANGER CAME TO YOU IN YOUR INCARCERATION... AND TOLD YOU OF *HOPE* AND *FAITH* AND *REDEMPTION*...
YOU WERE ONLY TOO GLAD TO LISTEN. *SIGH* SUCH A TRUSTING BOY. IT'LL BE THE DEATH OF YOU, IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
SWEET DREAMS, EDDIE.
HE'S IN SEIZURE. GET A CART IN HERE STAT!

NOOOO!
CLEAR!
LIES! ALL LIES!
IT... IT CAN'T BE... TRUE...

NO...
OH GOD...
WHAT HAVE I DONE?



HELLO...?
SPAWN...?
ANYONE...?

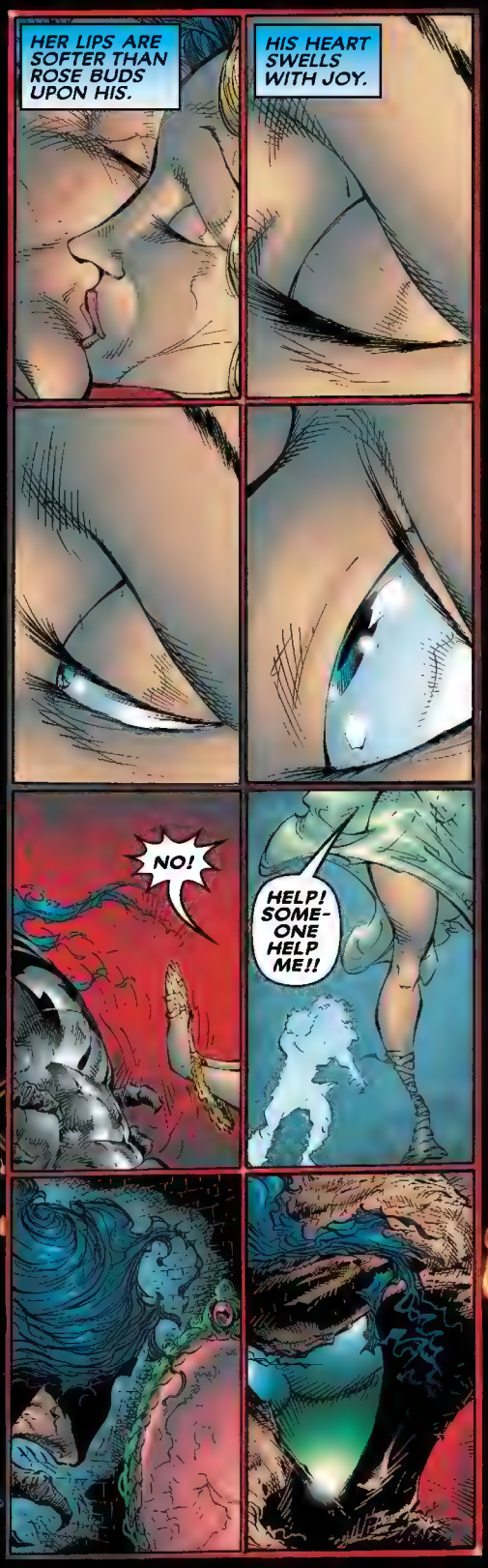
118 JUN 2002

"A SEASON IN HELL"

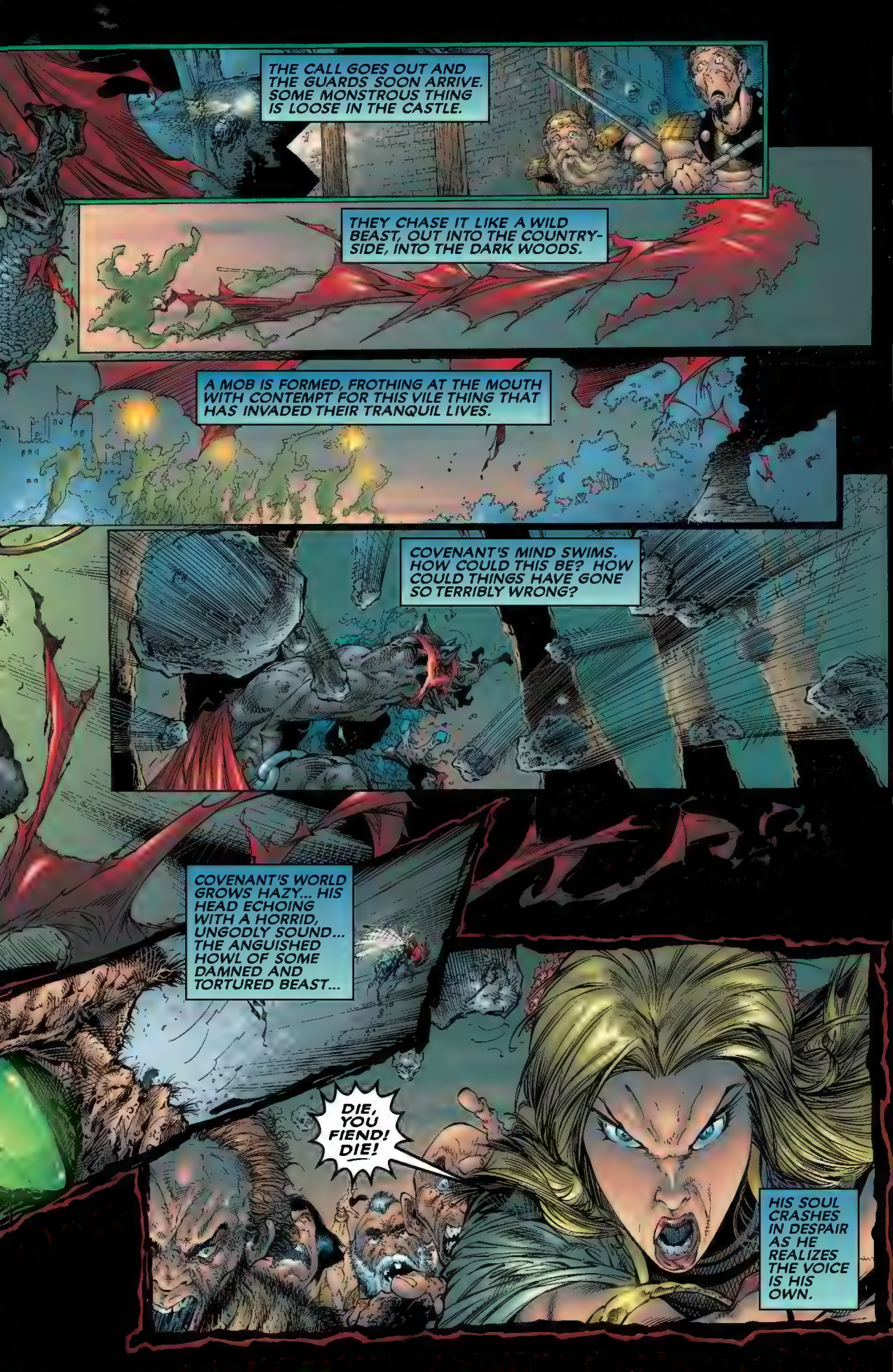
PART TWO

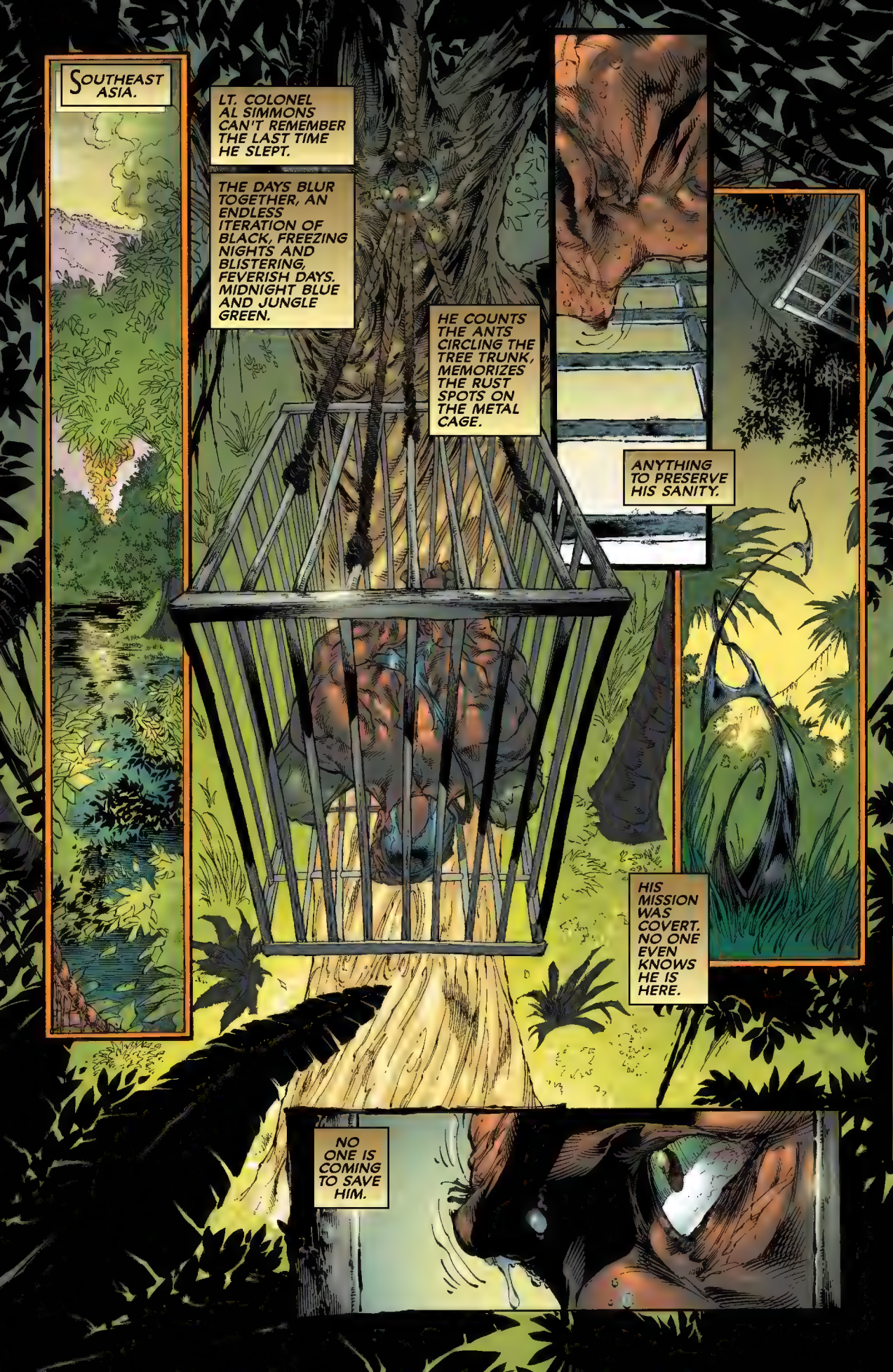
Spawn #118, cover

IT IS LORD COVENANT'S WEDDING NIGHT.
THE ENTIRE VILLAGE OF RHYLL CAME OUT TO CELEBRATE AND A GREAT FEAST WAS HELD.
NOW THEY ARE ALONE, HE AND HIS BRIDE. HE PULLS SHIANN TO HIM.

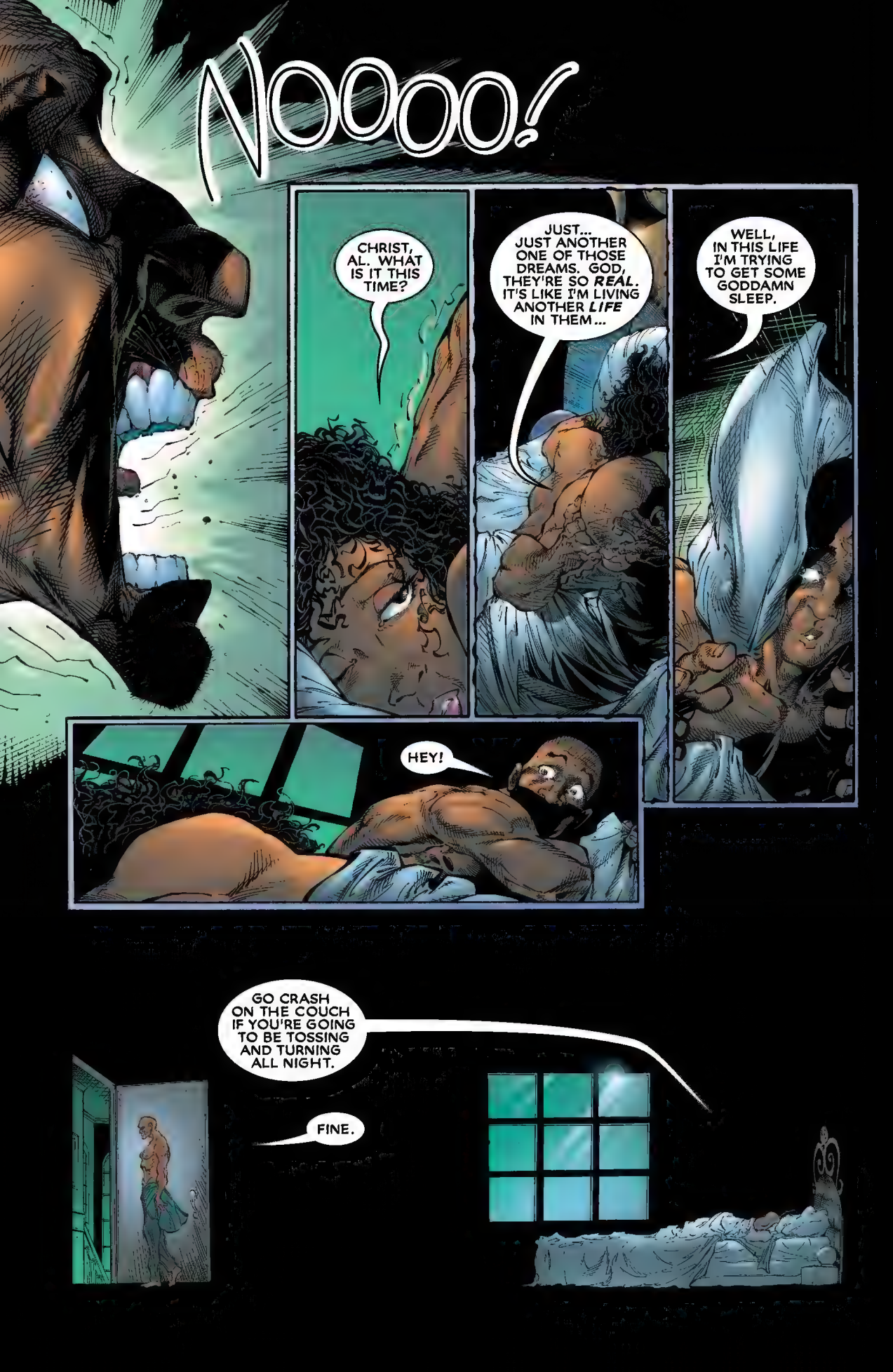

HER LIPS ARE SOFTER THAN ROSE BUDS UPON HIS.
HIS HEART SWELLS WITH JOY.
NO!
HELP! SOME-ONE HELP ME!!

IT CAN'T BE...
NOOOO


THE CALL GOES OUT AND THE GUARDS SOON ARRIVE. SOME MONSTROUS THING IS LOOSE IN THE CASTLE.
THEY CHASE IT LIKE A WILD BEAST, OUT INTO THE COUNTRY-SIDE, INTO THE DARK WOODS.
A MOB IS FORMED, FROTHING AT THE MOUTH WITH CONTEMPT FOR THIS VILE THING THAT HAS INVADED THEIR TRANQUIL LIVES.
COVENANT'S MIND SWIMS. HOW COULD THIS BE? HOW COULD THINGS HAVE GONE SO TERRIBLY WRONG?
COVENANT'S WORLD GROWS HAZY... HIS HEAD ECHOING WITH A HORRID, UNGODLY SOUND... THE ANGUISHED HOWL OF SOME DAMNED AND TORTURED BEAST...
DIE, YOU FIEND! DIE!
HIS SOUL CRASHES IN DESPAIR AS HE REALIZES THE VOICE IS HIS OWN.


SOUTHEAST ASIA.
LT. COLONEL AL SIMMONS CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME HE SLEPT.
THE DAYS BLUR TOGETHER, AN ENDLESS ITERATION OF BLACK, FREEZING NIGHTS AND BLISTERING, FEVERISH DAYS. MIDNIGHT BLUE AND JUNGLE GREEN.
HE COUNTS THE ANTS CIRCLING THE TREE TRUNK, MEMORIZES THE RUST SPOTS ON THE METAL CAGE.
ANYTHING TO PRESERVE HIS SANITY.
HIS MISSION WAS COVERT. NO ONE EVEN KNOWS HE IS HERE.
NO ONE IS COMING TO SAVE HIM.

I CAN SET YOU FREE, SIMMONS... I CAN MAKE YOU A BARGAIN...


Noooo!
CHRIST, AL. WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?
JUST... JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE DREAMS. GOD, THEY'RE SO REAL. IT'S LIKE I'M LIVING ANOTHER LIFE IN THEM...
WELL, IN THIS LIFE I'M TRYING TO GET SOME GODDAMN SLEEP.
HEY!
GO CRASH ON THE COUCH IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE TOSSING AND TURNING ALL NIGHT.
FINE.

LIGHTNING BREAKS THE SKY, LIKE A CRACK IN HEAVEN'S DOME.
ULRICH ULFSON BELLOWS THROUGH THE GALE, CURSING THE STORM. CURSING THE FICKLE GODS WHO HAVE BETRAYED HIM.
THE SEA WAS ONCE HIS FRIEND, BUT IT HAS TURNED ON HIM.
THE BLOATED CORPSE OF HIS BEST WIFE LIES IN A POOL AT HIS FEET, THEIR UNBORN SON A COLD, DEAD STONE IN HER BELLY.
IT IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME TILL THE HUNGRY WAVES SWALLOW HIM, LEAVING NO TRACE BEHIND.
NO STORIES WILL BE TOLD OF HIS FEATS, NO SONGS SUNG OF HIS BATTLES.
ULRICH SCREAMS HIS CURSES TO THE SKY AND THE GODS THUNDER BACK THEIR LAUGHTER.

TUNISIA.
YOU *MURDERED* A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION IN A SINGLE STROKE. THAT'S NOT INSIGNIFICANT.
I KILLED MY *BROTHER*.
IT COMES TO THE SAME THING, DOESN'T IT?
OH WELL. SPILT MILK. LET'S GET TO THE MATTER AT HAND. I AM *NOTHING* IF NOT A MAN OF MY *WORD*.
OH, BY THE WAY... THERE'S A *TREE* ABOUT 10 MILES EAST OF HERE. THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW.

HELLO, OLD MAN. QUITE WARM, ISN'T IT? HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
TAKE A GUESS.
NOW, NOW. NO NEED TO BE CROSS. WE BOTH KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS SOONER OR LATER. YOU'VE HAD A GOOD RUN.
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, YOU COULD HAVE DONE MUCH WORSE. NOW THAT THIS DAY IS HERE, WHY NOT TAKE IT LIKE A MAN?
WAS I REALLY SO WICKED? WERE MY SINS SO GREAT?

WHAT THE HELL...?
WANDA AND TERRY?
HONK! HONK!
SORRY!
RELAX, AL. TAKE A DEEP BREATH. DON'T LET YOUR IMAGINATION GET THE BEST OF YOU.
PROBABLY WASN'T EVEN THEM.

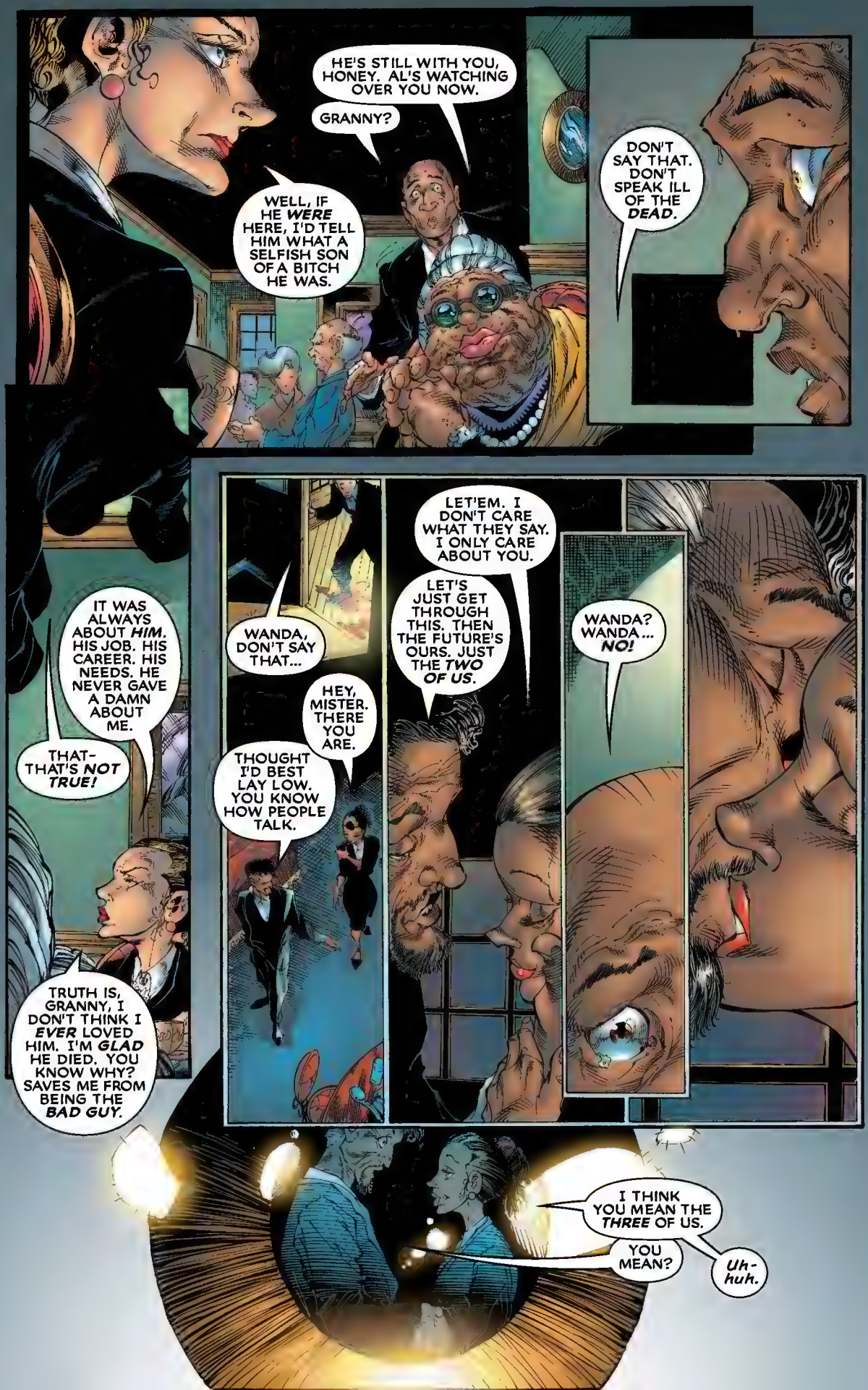
PROBABLY JUST SEEING...
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
LIKE AN ANGEL...
WHOAAA!

KERR-AAASH!
NOOO!
CONSUMED IN FLAME, AL SIMMONS' LIFE FLASHES BEFORE HIM.
WHAT HE WOULDN'T BARGAIN FOR ONE MORE CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT.

FINE...
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH...

THE MOON RISES OVER THE SANDS, A FLAWLESS PEARL AGAINST DARK SILK. FROM THE TOP OF THE HIGHEST DUNE, HARUN-AL-MAJNUN SCANS THE ENDLESS HORIZON.
HIS STEED STIRS BENEATH HIM, FITFUL AND RESTLESS. THERE IS EVIL ON THE WIND.
TO THE WEST, THE CITY OF BALAKESH RISES LIKE AN ORCHID FROM THE DESERT, A PERFUMED ALTAR TO BEAUTY AND LEARNING.
THEY ARE TOO FAR AWAY. HE CANNOT REACH THEM IN TIME.
NO MATTER. HE HOLDS THE TRUMPET OF GLORY, CARVED FROM THE BONES OF A DEAD GOD, ITS POWER STRONG ENOUGH TO FELL A HUNDRED ARMIES.
HE RAISES THE HORN TO HIS LIPS AND BLOWS WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH. NO SOUND COMES.
HE TRIES AGAIN AND AGAIN, BUT HIS EFFORTS ARE MET ONLY WITH SILENCE.
HARUN-AL-MAJNUN WATCHES HELPLESSLY AS HIS BELOVED BALAKESH, THE NAVEL OF THE ENLIGHTENED WORLD, IS RAZED TO THE GROUND.

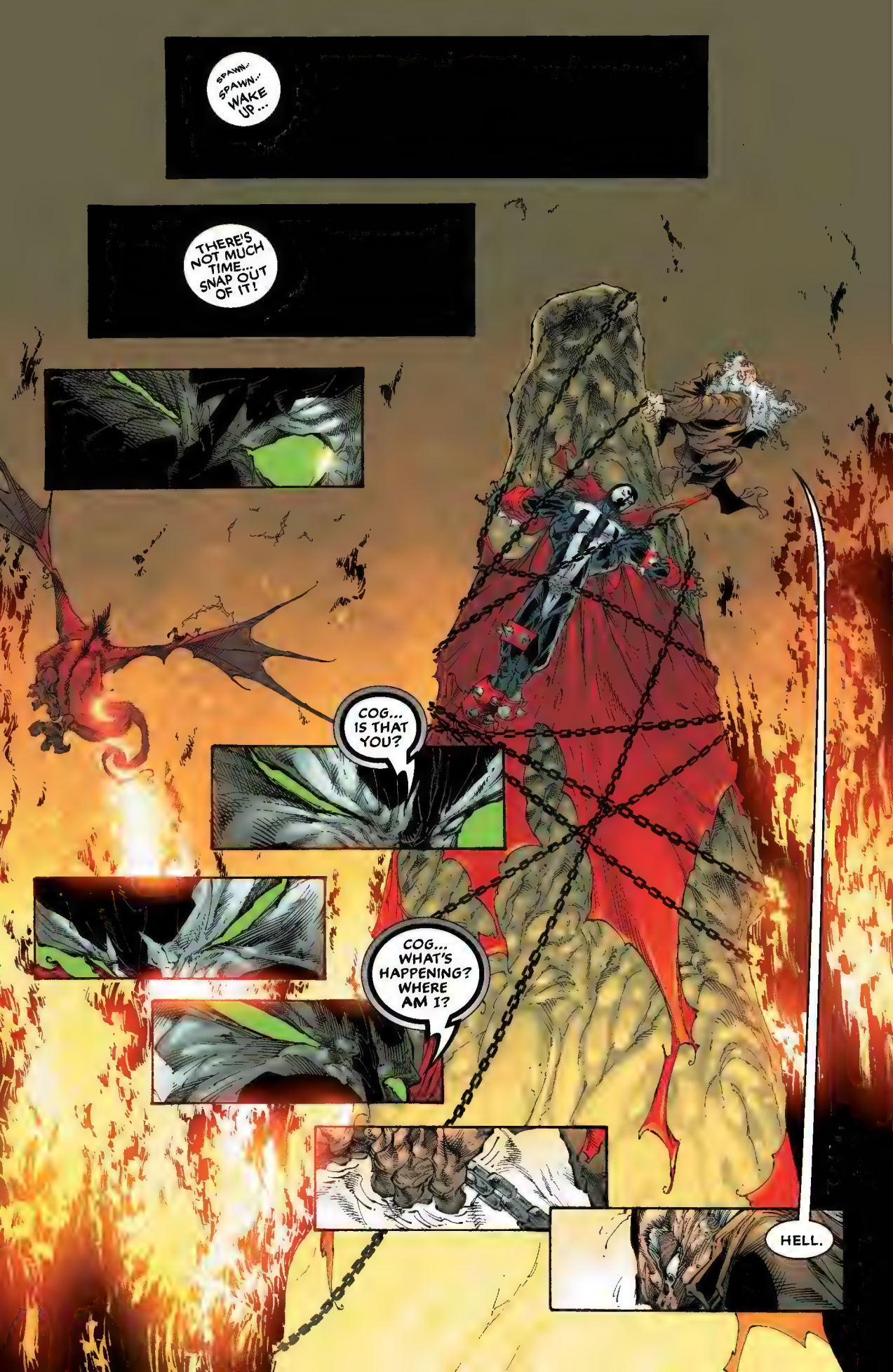
Lt. COLONEL AL SIMMONS LOVED HIS COUNTRY, LOVED HIS FAMILY.
AND HE WAS MUCH LOVED IN RETURN...
WANDA? HELLO? WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE HERE?
IT WAS A LOVELY SERVICE, DESPITE THE RAIN.
HELLO?
HEY, IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
I'M RIGHT *HERE*.
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW SORRY WE ARE FOR YOUR LOSS, MRS. SIMMONS.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN DO, ANYTHING *I* CAN DO, PLEASE SAY THE WORD.
THANK YOU, MR. WYNN.
WYNN! GET AWAY FROM MY WIFE!
WANDA! WANDA! COME BACK!


HE'S STILL WITH YOU, HONEY. AL'S WATCHING OVER YOU NOW.
GRANNY?
WELL, IF HE *WERE* HERE, I'D TELL HIM WHAT A SELFISH SON OF A BITCH HE WAS.
DON'T SAY THAT. DON'T SPEAK ILL OF THE *DEAD*.
IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT *HIM*. HIS JOB. HIS CAREER. HIS NEEDS. HE NEVER GAVE A DAMN ABOUT ME.
THAT- THAT'S *NOT TRUE!*
TRUTH IS, GRANNY, I DON'T THINK I *EVER* LOVED HIM. I'M *GLAD* HE DIED. YOU KNOW WHY? SAVES ME FROM BEING THE *BAD GUY*.
WANDA, DON'T SAY THAT...
HEY, MISTER. THERE YOU ARE.
THOUGHT I'D BEST LAY LOW. YOU KNOW HOW PEOPLE TALK.
LET'EM. I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY SAY. I ONLY CARE ABOUT YOU.
LET'S JUST GET THROUGH THIS. THEN THE FUTURE'S OURS. JUST THE *TWO OF US*.
WANDA? WANDA... *NO!*
I THINK YOU MEAN THE *THREE* OF US.
YOU MEAN?
Uh-huh.

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...
IT'S NOT REAL...
JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE *DREAMS*... ANOTHER *NIGHTMARE*... IT'S NOT *REAL*...
IT'S NOT TOO LATE, YOU KNOW...
WHO'S THERE? CAN YOU *SEE* ME?

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO STRIKE A BARGAIN.
I CAN END THIS FOR YOU. ALL THIS SUFFERING, ALL THIS PAIN. I CAN SET YOU FREE.

SURRENDER YOUR BURDENS TO ME. I WILL TAKE YOUR PLACE. GLADLY.
AND YOU WILL BE FREE AGAIN. BUT YOU MUST GIVE YOUR POWER WILLINGLY.
WE BOTH KNOW YOU NEVER WANTED IT...
TRUST ME...
TRUST ME.
POWER? WHAT POWER? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I CAN BE PATIENT. I'LL GIVE YOU SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
BUT NOT TOO LONG.

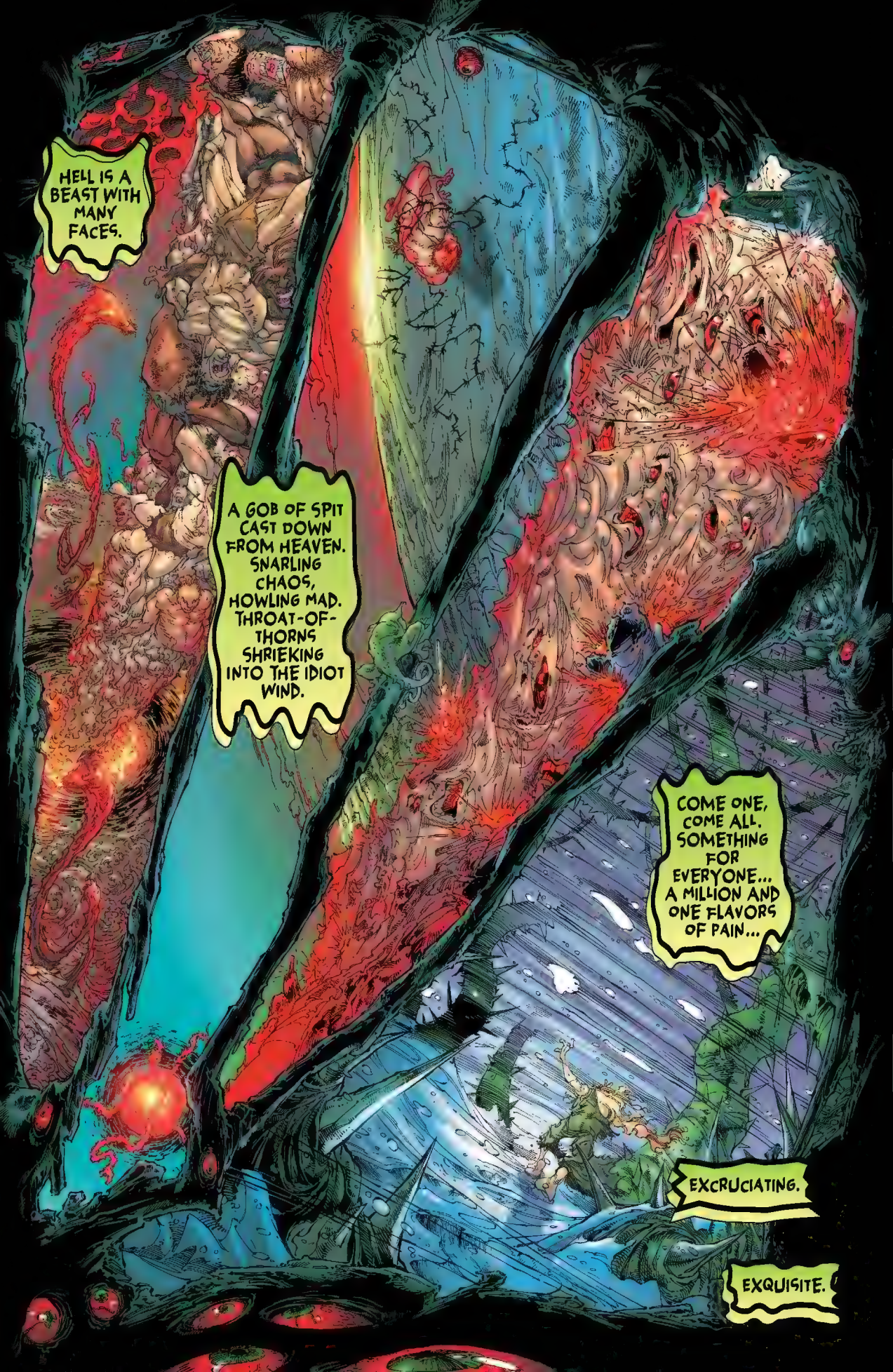

SPAWN... SPAWN... WAKE UP...
THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME... SNAP OUT OF IT!
COG... IS THAT YOU?
COG... WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHERE AM I?
HELL.

WE'RE IN HELL.

"A SEASON IN HELL"

PART THREE

Spawn #119, cover


HELL IS A BEAST WITH MANY FACES.
A GOB OF SPIT CAST DOWN FROM HEAVEN. SNARLING CHAOS, HOWLING MAD. THROAT-OF-THORNS SHRIEKING INTO THE IDIOT WIND.
COME ONE, COME ALL. SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE... A MILLION AND ONE FLAVORS OF PAIN...
EXCRUCIATING.
EXQUISITE.

IT STARTED THUS: LORD MALEBOLGIA STRUCK DOWN BY THE SIMMONS-SHADOW, THE HEAVEN-EARTH-HELL'S PAWN.
A KING'S THRONE LEFT ABANDONED. LOST ORPHANS STAND LONGING FOR THEIR CRUEL FATHER-GOD.

A CIRCLE OF CHAOS. WAR BETWEEN THE DEMON BREED. ENDLESS YEARS OF CARNAGE... CRIMSON PULP SEAS... ROTTING MOTH-WING SKIES...
PHLEBIAC VILE-HATER AND HIS BROTHERS-IN-BLOOD LEAD AN ARMY. THEY SEIZE CONTROL, BUT CANNOT HOLD IT.
DISSENT AND TURMOIL. ARMIES DIVIDE LIKE CANCER CELLS AND TURN ON THEIR HOST.

THE SOULS' REBELLION: MAD MARK, CHILD BEAST OF SAINT MONICA, LEADS A LEGION OF THE DAMNED.
THE MURDERERS' BRIGADE CRIES FREEDOM AND RAILS AGAINST THE DEMONIC LORDS.
YEARS PASS. YEARS AND MORE. POWER SHIFTS LIKE DESERT SANDS.
HELL'S CIRCLE... BROKEN UPON THE WHEEL... A HISSING SERPENT, IT SEEPS ACROSS THE BORDERS INTO THE WORLD ABOVE...
AND STILL, DOWN BELOW, THEY FIGHT. TOOTH AND CLAW. FANG AND TALON. WHAT WILL THEY SAY NOW? WHAT WILL THEY DO?
NOW THAT THEIR KING IS RETURNED...

KIN-SLAYER... FIRST-OF-KILLERS...
YOU SAD, QUIVERING LITTLE LUMP OF SHIT. WE HAVE BEEN WAITING A *VERY, VERY LONG TIME* FOR *YOU*.
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE THE *BALLS* TO COME HERE.
AND *DESPAIR*...
LOOK UPON YOUR WORKS, OLD MAN...

STOP! LET HIM GO!
THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU, LITTLE THING.
SO SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP.
WHAT'S THIS?

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLLOWED. THIS IS A GAME FOR THE *BIG BOYS*.
DON'T YOU SEE? HEAVEN'S HAD ITS USE OF YOU AND HAS DISCARDED YOU.
NOW...

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS? DID...DID *HE* GIVE THIS TO YOU?
IS *THAT* YOUR GAME?
HA HA HA!
PLEASE... I NEED...
YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK IT WOULD MAKE A *DIFFERENCE* DID YOU?
YOU'RE A GREATER FOOL THAN I HAD GUESSED.

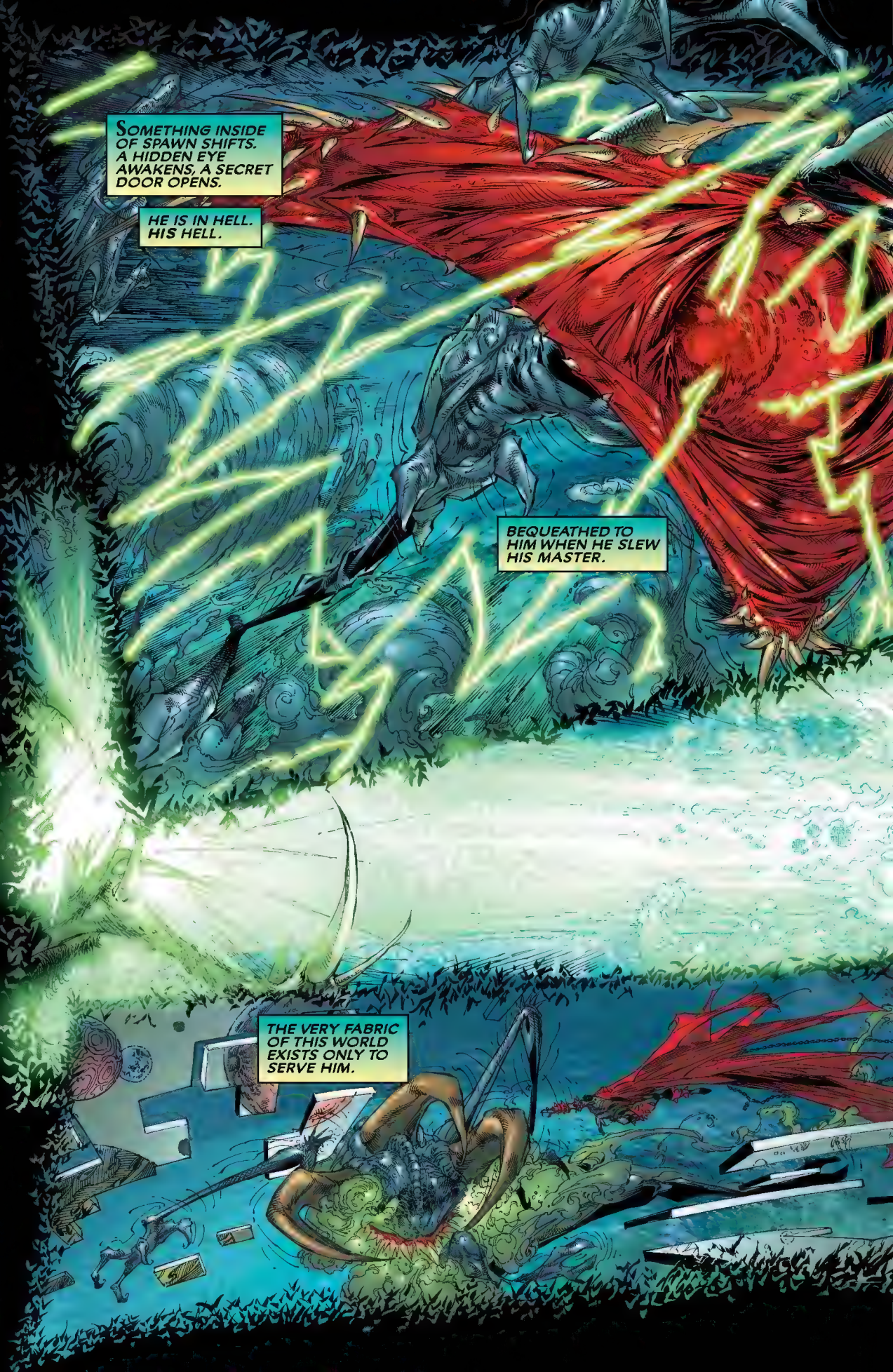
SO... TRYING TO SNEAK OFF WITH OUR LITTLE PLAYTHING, WERE YOU?
LET ME BE CLEAR: I WANT THE THRONE OF HELL. I'VE WAITED A LOOONG TIME FOR IT. AND I WILL SEIZE IT BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.
AND EVEN A FEW THAT AREN'T NECESSARY.
UGHHN...
SAY THE WORDS, HELLSPAWN. TELL ME THE THRONE IS MINE. IT'S OF NO USE TO YOU. BOW DOWN BEFORE ME AND ALL THIS CAN BE OVER...
N-N-NO....
I'M QUITE GOOD AT MY JOB. I'VE BEEN DOING IT A LONG TIME.
AND I CAN HURT ANYBODY. EVEN A SOMEONE AS IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN SUFFERING AS YOU...
YAAHH!
I KNOW YOUR WEAK SPOTS, SPAWN...

WANDA... PERFECT, IDEALIZED *WANDA*. SHE *BELONGS* TO US, YOU KNOW. WE'VE PLANTED OUR SEED IN HER. CARVED OUR *NAME* ON HER WOMB.
WHEN SHE COMES TO US, I WILL SEE THAT SHE SUFFERS AS NO *SOUL* EVER HAS.
WRITHING IN AGONY FOR ALL *ETERNITY*. AND I WILL MAKE SURE SHE KNOWS... EVERY PAINFUL MOMENT... THAT IT IS ALL YOUR *FAULT*.
SO, SPAWN... WHAT DO YOU--
WOMP!
SHOULDN'T... HAVE MENTIONED... WANDA.
OOOOH... LITTLE MAN, DID I MAKE YOU *MAD*?!

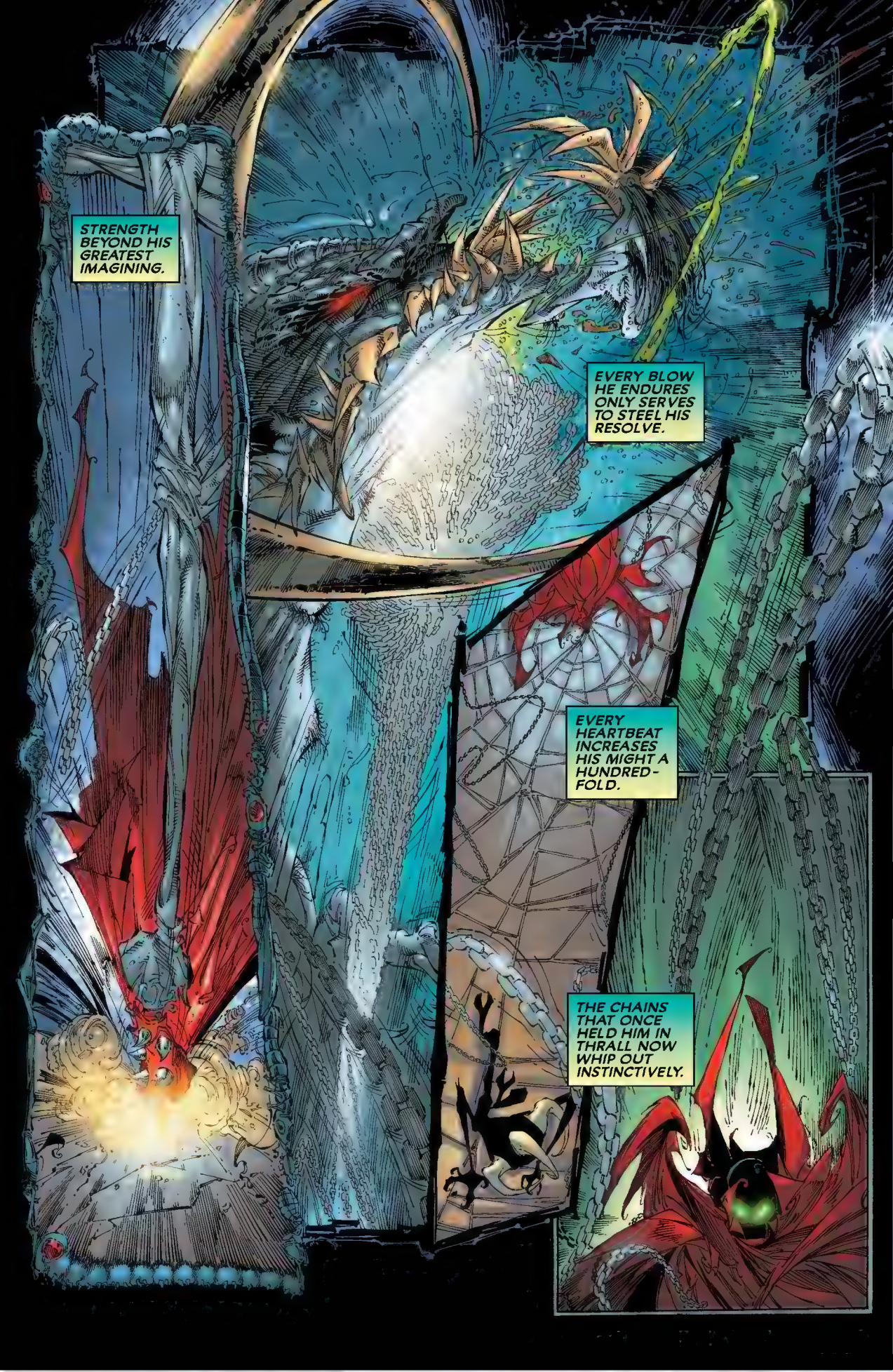
I WAS *HOPING* WE COULD DO THIS THE *HARD* WAY.
GOOD!

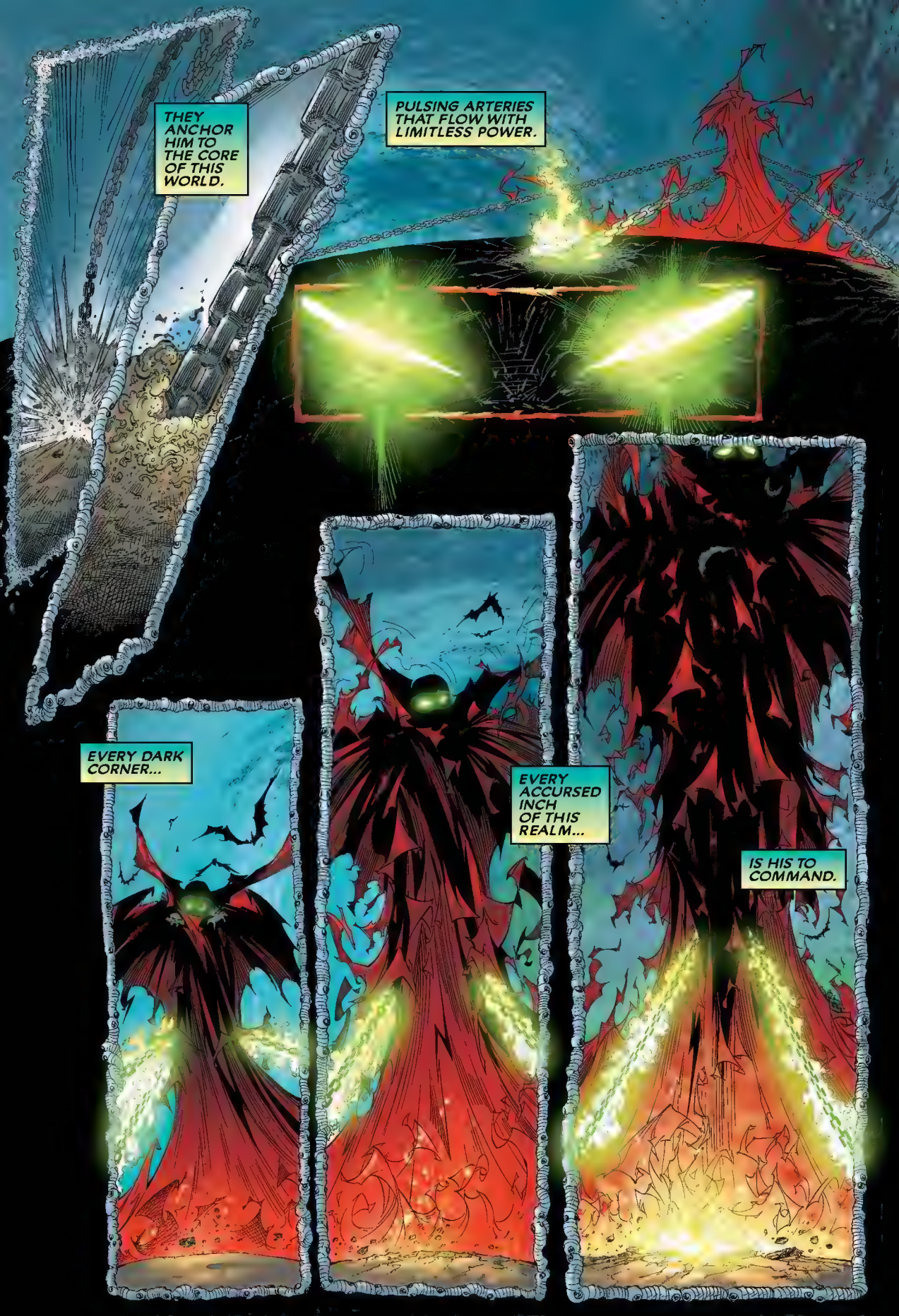
WE'RE GOING TO TEAR YOU TO SCRAPS, HELL-SPAWN.
AND THEN I'M GOING TO SUCK THE MARROW FROM YOUR BONES.
THE BATTLE ECHOES ACROSS THE FIELDS OF HELL.

FROM THE PILLARS OF TARTARUS TO THE WASTES OF NIHIL.
FROM THE DROWNING SHALLOWS TO THE FOREST OF THORNS.
ALL PERDITION QUAKES.
COME ON, CAPTAIN MISERY! IS THAT THE BEST YOU'VE GOT? WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING DO? *MOPE* ME INTO SUBMISSION?!


SOMETHING INSIDE OF SPAWN SHIFTS. A HIDDEN EYE AWAKENS, A SECRET DOOR OPENS.
HE IS IN HELL. HIS HELL.
BEQUEATHED TO HIM WHEN HE SLEW HIS MASTER.
THE VERY FABRIC OF THIS WORLD EXISTS ONLY TO SERVE HIM.

IT IS MORE THAN A POSSESSION. IT IS AN EXTENSION OF HIM.
IT FEEDS AND COMFORTS HIM.
IT GIVES HIM STRENGTH.


STRENGTH BEYOND HIS GREATEST IMAGINING.
EVERY BLOW HE ENDURES ONLY SERVES TO STEEL HIS RESOLVE.
EVERY HEARTBEAT INCREASES HIS MIGHT A HUNDRED-FOLD.
THE CHAINS THAT ONCE HELD HIM IN THRALL NOW WHIP OUT INSTINCTIVELY.


THEY ANCHOR HIM TO THE CORE OF THIS WORLD.
PULSING ARTERIES THAT FLOW WITH LIMITLESS POWER.
EVERY DARK CORNER...
EVERY ACCURSED INCH OF THIS REALM...
IS HIS TO COMMAND.

HIS VOICE IS FIRE. HIS WORDS ARE THUNDER.
DO YOUR WORST.
CALL ALL THE HORDES OF HELL TO YOUR SIDE. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.
THIS REALM IS MINE.
AND I HAVE AN ARMY OF MY OWN!

ELSEWHERE...
PRETTY THING...SHINY-PRETTY... WHAT SECRETS DO YOU HOLD, LITTLE FRIEND?
?
FROM THE VALLEY OF THE TEARS COMES A GREAT CRACKING SOUND...
... AS ANCIENT CHAINS BREAK AND SLIP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MEMORY.

OVER THE RISE THEY COME...
AWAKENED FROM EONS OF PRIVATE TORMENT...

...TO FIGHT BESIDE THEIR KING AND BROTHER.
THE LEGION OF THE MOST DAMNED, THE ARMY OF THE HELLSPAWN, CUT A RAGGED SWATH ACROSS THE FACE OF HELL.

TRAITORS AND REBELS... DEMONS AND DAMNED... CHOOSE YOUR SIDES.
THE KING OF HELL HAS RETURNED!

"A SEASON IN HELL"

PART FOUR

Spawn #120, cover

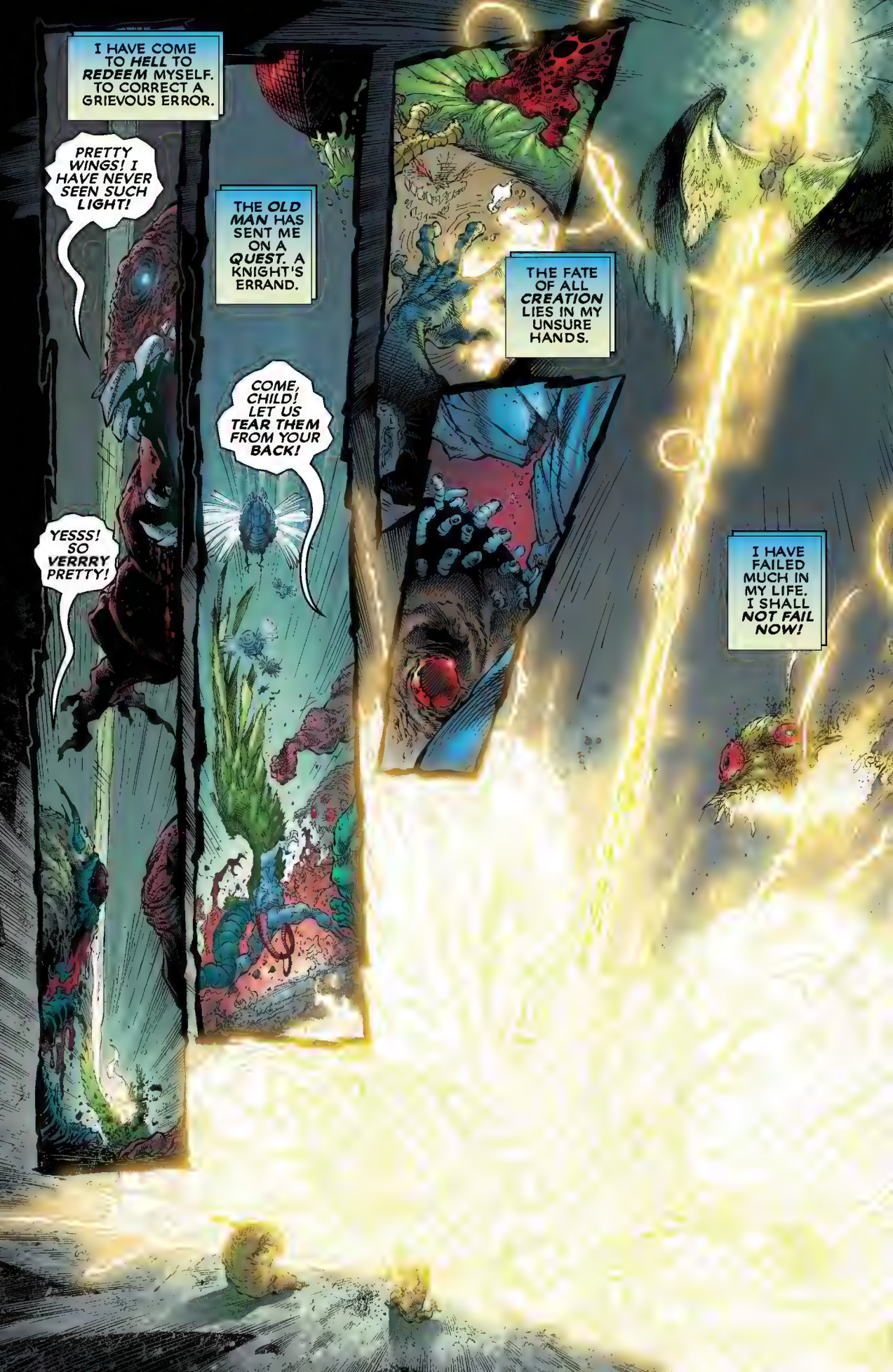
IN THE BEGINNING...
BROTHER?
THINK HOW IT MUST HAVE BEEN... THE *FIRST TIME* A LIFE WAS TAKEN. THE FIRST TIME A MAN HAD *DIED,* HIS BODY COLD AND PALE ON THE WARM GRASS.
GET UP, BROTHER. STOP PLAYING GAMES.
BROTHER... CAN YOU HEAR ME? BROTHER?
HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?
ABEL...?
CAIN! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I-I DIDN'T MEAN TO... I DIDN'T KNOW...
HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN WHAT FRAGILE BEINGS OUR *MAKER* HAD FASHIONED?
AND HOW COULD WE HAVE GUESSED AT THE CRUELTY OF HIS *JUDGMENT?*

Now...
THIS PLACE FILLS ME WITH *DREAD.* A SINGULAR TERROR SHARED WITH NO ONE ELSE IN CREATION.
FOR I ALONE KNOW THE TRUTH OF THIS WORLD: THIS PLACE WHICH IS *MORE* THAN A PLACE...
THIS SEETHING CRUCIBLE OF PAIN AND TORMENT...

THE POISONED FRUIT OF ONE MINDLESS ACT OF VIOLENCE...

WAS MADE FOR *ME*.
I MADE A VOW. SINCE BEFORE THERE WERE WORDS TO COUNT THE SLOW MARCH OF CENTURIES...
I SWORE, WITH ALL THE HATRED I HELD FOR MY CREATOR, THAT I WOULD NEVER *SERVE A DAY* IN THIS PLACE.
I HAVE BEEN *TRUE* TO MY WORD.

I AM AN ANGEL, A CREATURE OF PURE LIGHT AND BEAUTY. THE FIRE OF HEAVEN FLOWS THROUGH MY SUBLIME FORM.
I AM A CHILD. LYING COMA-STILL IN A NEW YORK HOSPITAL ROOM, A BULLET LODGED IN MY BRAIN.
BRIGHT THING! COME PLAY WITH US!
HOW CAN BOTH THESE THINGS BE TRUE? YET, SOMEHOW I SENSE THAT THEY ARE.


I HAVE COME TO *HELL* TO *REDEEM* MYSELF. TO CORRECT A GRIEVOUS ERROR.
PRETTY WINGS! I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH LIGHT!
THE *OLD MAN* HAS SENT ME ON A *QUEST*. A KNIGHT'S ERRAND.
THE FATE OF ALL *CREATION* LIES IN MY UNSURE HANDS.
COME, CHILD! LET US TEAR THEM FROM YOUR BACK!
YESSS! SO VERRRY PRETTY!
I HAVE FAILED MUCH IN MY LIFE. I SHALL *NOT FAIL NOW!*

HELL IS AT *WAR*, RENDING ITSELF TO PIECES.
THE DEMON-KIND FIGHT WITH A MAD DESPERATION.
SOME HOPING AGAINST HOPE FOR A VICTORY...
HAAAGH!

...OTHERS CONTENT TO GORGE THEMSELVES ON SCRAPS.
IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL IS HELL'S ERRANT KING. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS *DARK* AND *TERRIBLE GOD* WAS ONCE A MAN.
BOW DOWN!
BOW BEFORE ME AND TREMBLE!
NEVER!
I ONLY HOPE HE IS STILL *HUMAN* ENOUGH TO REMEMBER WHY WE CAME HERE.

I SEE BEINGS MADE ONLY TO *HATE* SCALE NEW HEIGHTS OF *CRUELTY*.
I SEE AN *ARMY* CLOAKED IN *RED*, RELEASED FROM THE SLOW, GLACIAL DRIP OF ETERNITY TO FIGHT ONE MORE GLORIOUS *BATTLE*.
AND I SEE A FROTHING MOB OF *DAMNED SOULS* SCREAM WITH A *RAGE* I KNOW ALL TOO WELL.
KILL THEM! IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM! KILL THEM ALL!

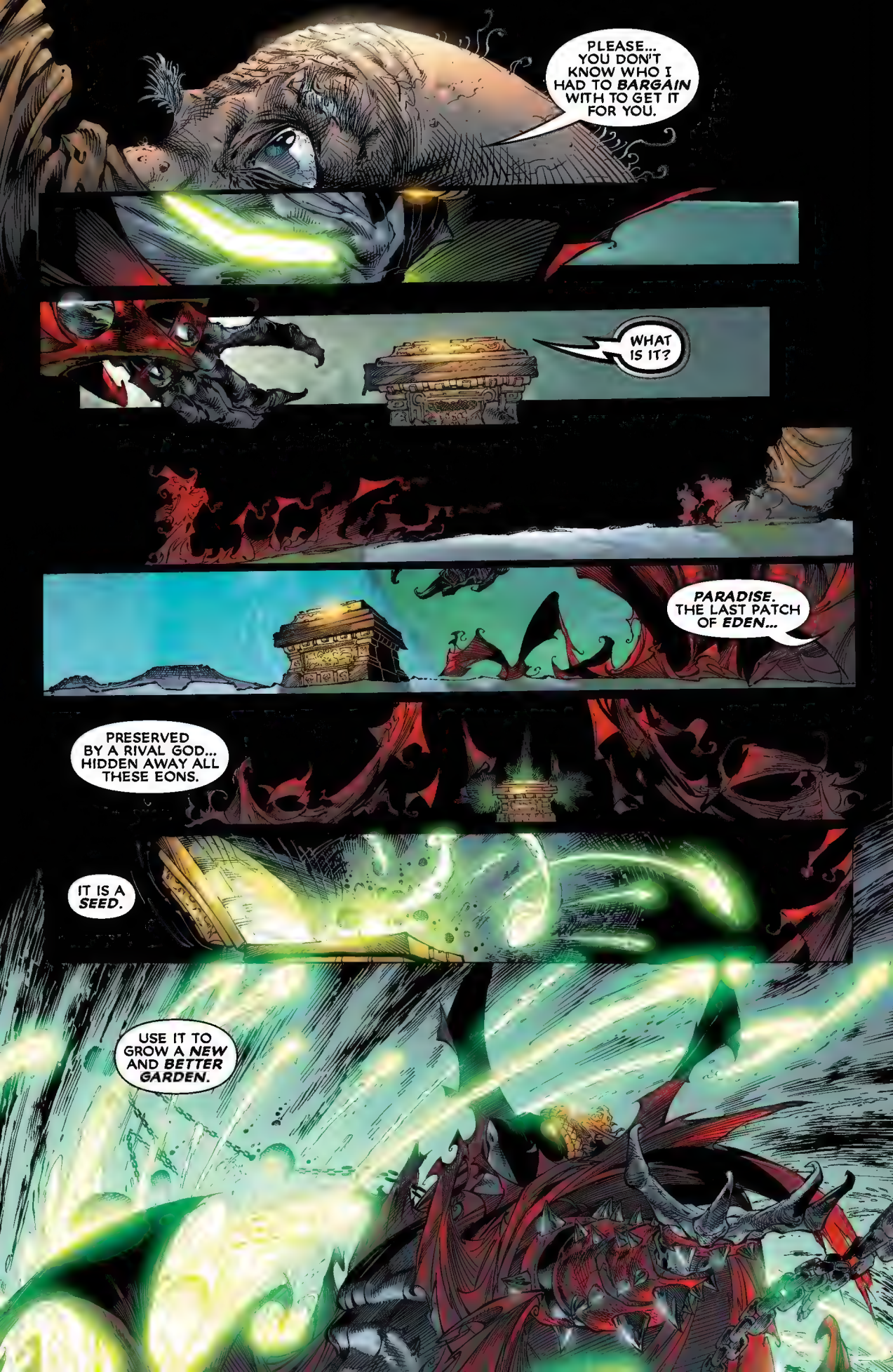
IT IS A MAGNIFICENT *DRAMA* TO BEHOLD.
BUT IN THE END, IT IS ONLY A PROLOGUE...
MERELY A DUMB-SHOW...
THE DENOUEMENT IS CLEAR.
THE *VICTOR* WAS NAMED LONG AGO.
RUMBLE

FROM A MILE OFF, I CAN TELL I HAVE FOUND IT.
AN INTUITION, LIKE A TUNING FORK CHIMING IN THE CORE OF MY HEART.
SOOO... BEAUTIFUL... SO AWFUL...
I CAN'T GUESS WHAT MANNER OF BEAST GUARDS MY QUARRY.
I MUST BE *BOLD*.
TAKE IT.
EX- EXCUSE ME...YOU HAVE SOMETHING I *NEED*.
IT IS TOO PAINFUL TO LOOK AT.

A PALACE BEFITTING A *DARK MONARCH* IS SPAT FORTH FROM THE BOWELS OF HELL.
LET THERE BE NO MISTAKE...
WE ALL STAND IN AWE AND WATCH... MUTE WITNESSES TO A *FIERY CORONATION.*
THE KING OF HELL IS RETURNED!

IT HAS GONE WELL. BUT THERE IS STILL ONE PIECE MISSING.
I HAVE IT! I FOUND IT!
LET THOSE WHO STOOD BESIDE ME...
AND THOSE WHO STOOD AGAINST ME...
COME FORWARD AND FACE MY JUDGMENT.
SPAWN! PLEASE! LISTEN TO ME!
IS IT TOO LATE? IS HE TOO FAR GONE?

IF SO, WE ARE ALL DOOMED.
REMEMBER... REMEMBER WHY YOU DID THIS...
YOU WANTED TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD. YOU'RE SO CLOSE. DON'T LET IT ALL SLIP THROUGH YOUR FINGERS!
HERE! TAKE IT! IT'S EVERYTHING YOU WANTED!


PLEASE... YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I HAD TO *BARGAIN* WITH TO GET IT FOR YOU.
WHAT IS IT?
PARADISE. THE LAST PATCH OF *EDEN*...
PRESERVED BY A RIVAL GOD... HIDDEN AWAY ALL THESE EONS.
IT IS A *SEED*.
USE IT TO GROW A *NEW* AND *BETTER GARDEN*.

SPAWN! IT'S WORKING! YOU *DID IT*. I AM SO PROUD OF YOU.
AND LOOK... SHE IS WAITING FOR YOU. JUST AS YOU ALWAYS *KNEW* SHE WOULD...

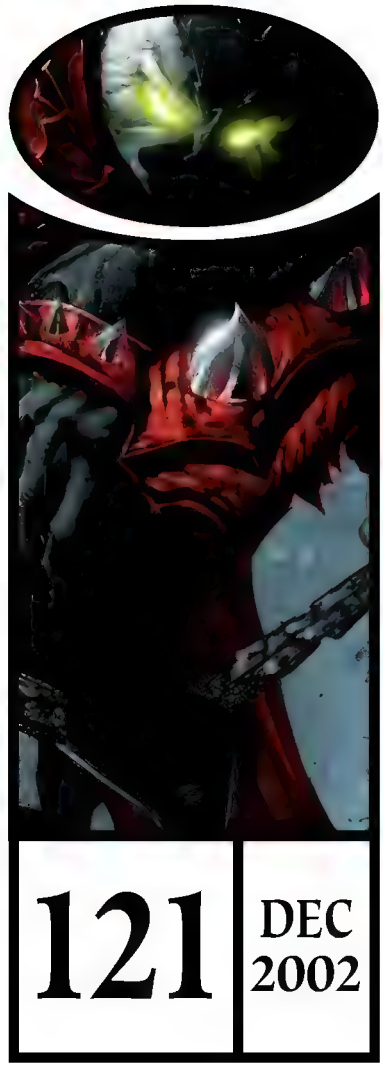
AL--?
DEEP INSIDE, THERE WAS ONE SHINING MOTE OF *HUMANITY* THAT COULD NOT BE DARKENED.
WANDA...?
A LOVE THAT COULD BRIDGE WORLDS.
IS THAT REALLY YOU?
LOVE THAT COULD MAKE A MAN RETURN FROM THE GRAVE.
THAT WOULD LET A *KING* WILLINGLY RENOUNCE HIS *THRONE*.
OH, AL.
WANDA...

I HAVE BEEN CALLED MANY NAMES IN MY TIME: CAIN. MALCUS. MERLIN. FAUSTUS. COGLIOSTRO.
FOR CENTURY STACKED UPON CENTURY, LIFETIME AFTER LIFETIME, I HAVE SOUGHT SOMEONE TO RELEASE ME FROM THE TERRIBLE CURSE THAT HAS HOUNDED ME.
YOU WERE THE *ONE*.

IT IS A CRUEL JOKE, I SUPPOSE. *EDEN* WAS ALWAYS A *LIE*--A THING TO BE DREAMT OF, BUT NEVER ATTAINED.
BUT HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN THAT? YOU WEREN'T THERE IN THE BEGINNING.
BUT THEN, THIS NEVER WAS YOUR STORY, WAS IT?
IT WAS *MINE*.
ALL I CAN DO FOR YOU, MY FRIEND, IS GRANT AS BEST I CAN THE *ONE THING* YOU ALWAYS WANTED.

I WON'T PRETEND THIS WAS ANYTHING LESS THAN A BETRAYAL. I MAKE NO APOLOGIES AND LONG AGO GAVE UP HOPING FOR FORGIVENESS.
I MERELY DID WHAT I HAD TO.
BEFORE THERE WERE WORDS TO COUNT THE SLOW MARCH OF CENTURIES, I SWORE THAT I WOULD NEVER *SERVE A DAY* IN THIS PLACE.
I HAVE KEPT MY WORD.
'Le roi est mort, vive le roi.'

New York.
"...And after flattering dust
with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again – for what?"
Lord Byron
"Cain, A Mystery"
1821



121

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2002

"SALVATION ROAD"

PART ONE

Spawn #121, cover

NEW YORK.
WAKE UP...
WAKE UP...

IT'S JUST A DREAM...

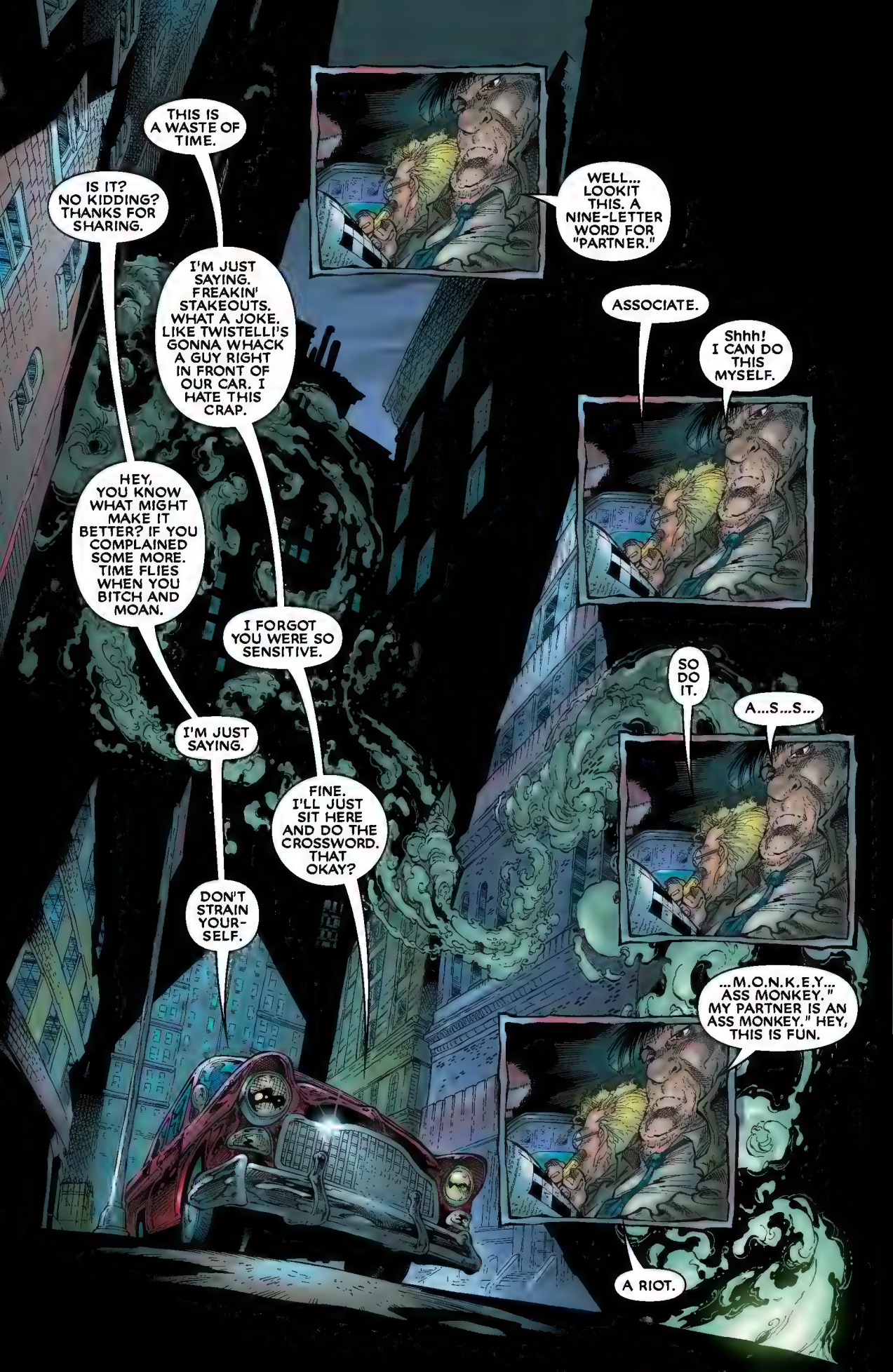
HEY, BUDDY. YOU OKAY? LOOK LIKE YOU SEEN A GHOST.
COME ON, LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THE RAIN. YOU AIN'T LOOKIN' SO GOOD.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
I... I DON'T KNOW.
Uh-oh.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
NOTHIN', OFFICER SIR. JUST FRIENDLY CONVERSATION.
WHY DON'T YOU COME STAND OVER HERE.
OKAY.
HOW ARE YOU TONIGHT, SIR?
COULD YOU STEP ON TO THE SIDEWALK, PLEASE? ON THE SIDEWALK. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.
YOU LISTENING TO ME, SIR?
HELLO? ANYBODY IN THERE?

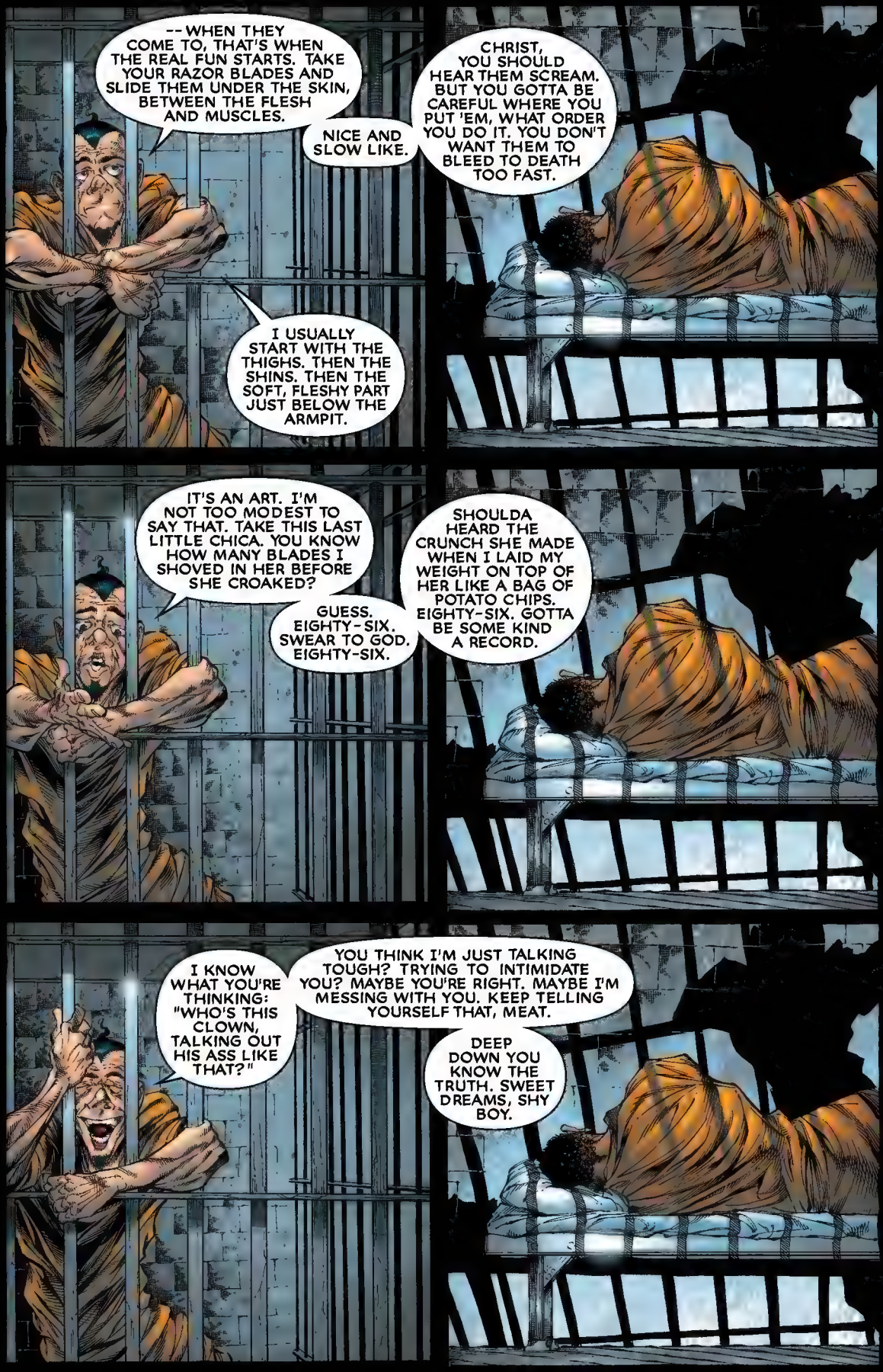
DON'T TOUCH ME!
Unff!
SON OF A BITCH!
AAAAH!
YOU GOT HIM?
NO.
WHOA! TAKE IT EASY!
FACE DOWN! FACE DOWN!
HELP! HATE CRIME! HATE CRIME!

GOOD. NOW THE LEFT HAND.
WANTED
JOHN DOE
ID #
INDEX
FOLLOW ME, SIR.
HAND

THANK YOU. NOW TURN TO YOUR RIGHT.
THANK YOU.
HEY, BUDDY.
WHAT ARE YOU IN FOR?

I'M NOT SURE.
SHY FELLOW, HUH?
KNOW WHAT THEY NAILED ME FOR? STOLEN CAR. TRANSPORTATION ACROSS STATE LINES. I'LL BE OUT IN TWO DAYS, TOPS.
THEY PULLED ME OVER AND I THOUGHT MY NUMBER WAS UP. BUT THESE COPS, THEY DON'T HAVE A CLUE. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
NO IDEA WHO THEY GOT LOCKED UP IN HERE.
YOU READ THE PAPERS? THE BALTIMORE RAZOR?
YOU'RE LOOKING AT HIM, PAL. THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S BEEN ALL OVER THE NEWS. HELL, I'M A CELEBRITY.
AND I'M GONNA SLIP RIGHT THROUGH THEIR FAT LITTLE FINGERS.


THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME.
IS IT? NO KIDDING? THANKS FOR SHARING.
I'M JUST SAYING. FREAKIN' STAKEOUTS. WHAT A JOKE. LIKE TWISTELLI'S GONNA WHACK A GUY RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR CAR. I HATE THIS CRAP.
HEY, YOU KNOW WHAT MIGHT MAKE IT BETTER? IF YOU COMPLAINED SOME MORE. TIME FLIES WHEN YOU BITCH AND MOAN.
I FORGOT YOU WERE SO SENSITIVE.
I'M JUST SAYING.
FINE. I'LL JUST SIT HERE AND DO THE CROSSWORD. THAT OKAY?
DON'T STRAIN YOUR-SELF.
WELL... LOOKIT THIS. A NINE-LETTER WORD FOR "PARTNER."
ASSOCIATE.
Shhh! I CAN DO THIS MYSELF.
SO DO IT.
A...S...S...
...M.O.N.K.E.Y... ASS MONKEY." MY PARTNER IS AN ASS MONKEY." HEY, THIS IS FUN.
A RIOT.


-- WHEN THEY COME TO, THAT'S WHEN THE REAL FUN STARTS. TAKE YOUR RAZOR BLADES AND SLIDE THEM UNDER THE SKIN, BETWEEN THE FLESH AND MUSCLES.
NICE AND SLOW LIKE.
I USUALLY START WITH THE THIGHS. THEN THE SHINS. THEN THE SOFT, FLESHY PART JUST BELOW THE ARMPIT.
CHRIST, YOU SHOULD HEAR THEM SCREAM. BUT YOU GOTTA BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU PUT 'EM, WHAT ORDER YOU DO IT. YOU DON'T WANT THEM TO BLEED TO DEATH TOO FAST.
IT'S AN ART. I'M NOT TOO MODEST TO SAY THAT. TAKE THIS LAST LITTLE CHICA. YOU KNOW HOW MANY BLADES I SHOVED IN HER BEFORE SHE CROAKED?
GUESS. EIGHTY-SIX. SWEAR TO GOD. EIGHTY-SIX.
SHOULDA HEARD THE CRUNCH SHE MADE WHEN I LAID MY WEIGHT ON TOP OF HER LIKE A BAG OF POTATO CHIPS. EIGHTY-SIX. GOTTA BE SOME KIND A RECORD.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: "WHO'S THIS CLOWN, TALKING OUT HIS ASS LIKE THAT?"
YOU THINK I'M JUST TALKING TOUGH? TRYING TO INTIMIDATE YOU? MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE I'M MESSING WITH YOU. KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, MEAT.
DEEP DOWN YOU KNOW THE TRUTH. SWEET DREAMS, SHY BOY.

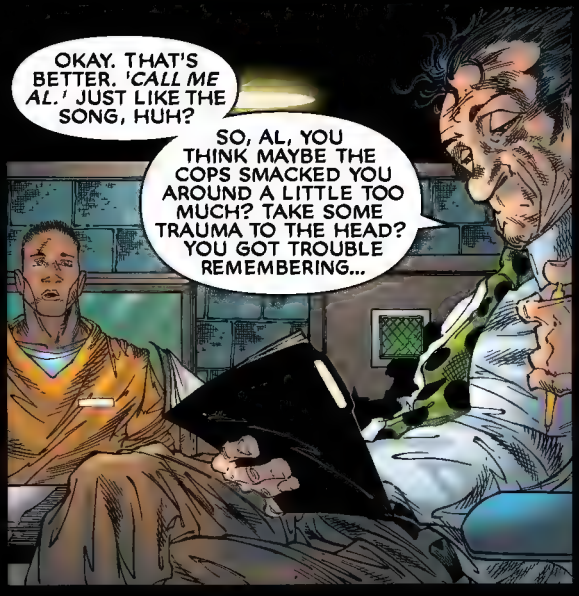
PROMISE ME, AL. PROMISE ME THIS TIME YOU WON'T LEAVE ME.
I PROMISE.
AAAAL?!
NOOO!!
COME ON, WAKE UP!
YOU. GET UP. LET'S GO.

HEY. HAVE A SEAT. MY NAME'S JACK SHEPHERD. I'M YOUR PUBLIC DEFENDER. LET'S SEE HERE... SAYS YOU HIT A COP. NOT GOOD. NOT SMART.
WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT IT, MR... UH...?
I DON'T REMEMBER.
klik klik klikity klik

YOU DON'T REMEMBER YOUR NAME? OR YOU DON'T REMEMBER HITTING A COP?
YOU OKAY, PAL? DID THEY ROUGH YOU UP?
I DON'T KNOW.
klik

I'LL SEE IF I CAN GET A DOCTOR TO LOOK AT YOU. MAYBE THOSE COPS KNOCKED SOMETHING --
AL.

WHAT'S THAT?
AL. I THINK MY NAME IS AL.


OKAY. THAT'S BETTER. 'CALL ME AL.' JUST LIKE THE SONG, HUH?
SO, AL, YOU THINK MAYBE THE COPS SMACKED YOU AROUND A LITTLE TOO MUCH? TAKE SOME TRAUMA TO THE HEAD? YOU GOT TROUBLE REMEMBERING...

IT'S LIKE... PART OF ME IS MISSING, SIR.

MISSING, HUH? IT SAYS YOU WERE...YOU WERE IN A UNIFORM? IS THAT RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW, SIR.
IN THE MILITARY? YOU ON LEAVE? GO AWOL, MAYBE?
YES? NO?
I DON'T KNOW. SORRY.
YOU WERE FOUND WANDERING AROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU WERE DOING LAST NIGHT?
NO SIR. I DON'T THINK SO.
OKAY...

LISTEN UP, AL. YOU'RE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE. IT'S MY JOB TO TRY AND HELP YOU. THAT'S WHAT I GET PAID FOR.
BUT YOU GOT TO TRUST ME, AT LEAST AS FAR AS WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, OKAY?
NOW, I'M GONNA TRY SOMETHING. THE WIFE DOES THIS WHEN I CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE I PUT MY CAR KEYS.
JUST RELAX NOW. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
GOOD. NOW BREATHE OUT, NICE AND SLOW.
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND CLEAR YOUR MIND FOR A SECOND. JUST RELAX AND BREATHE. SLOWLY, IN AND OUT.
NO PRESSURE. NO PRESSURE AT ALL.
NOW... JUST TELL ME THE FIRST THING THAT ENTERS YOUR MIND. DON'T THINK, JUST SAY IT.
WANDA.

Hmm?

WHO THE HELL--?
mmphuh phumphuh
YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE.

WELL, LOOK WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN.
HEY LIZ. WHAT IT IS?
JUST GETTING READY TO KNOCK OFF.
SLOW NIGHT?
PRETTY MUCH. SOME JOHN DOE PUNCHED OUT BRIGGS AND JACKSON.
WERE THEY HURT?
LOT OF BRUISES. BRIGGS GOT HIS SHOULDER DISLOCATED.
Phhht. LOSER. THIS THE GUY? BIG FELLA, AIN'T HE?
THAT'S HIM. SOLDIER OR SOMETHING, I THINK. GENTLE AS A LAMB WHEN THEY BROUGHT HIM IN. GUESS HE JUST SNAPPED.
Hmmm.
DID WE GET A NEW CAMERA, LIZ?
NOPE.
DIFFERENT FILM? CHANGE THE LIGHTING MAYBE?
NOPE. SAME OLD 30-YEAR-OLD CRAP. WHY?
IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING. JUST A LITTLE STRANGE, THAT'S ALL.
TAKE A LOOK.
HE DOESN'T HAVE A *SHADOW.*
NEW YORK POLICE

AAAIEEE!
HELP ME!!
WHAT THE F---?
WHO WAS THAT?
IT'S COMING FROM THE CAGES.
AMBULANCE! CALL AN AMBULANCE NOW!
HOLY CRAP.

huh-
HELP
ME...

SORRY... I'M SORRY...
WHO COULDA GOT IN THERE?
NO ONE. IT WAS LOCKED!
SO, WHAT? HE RIPPED HIS *OWN SKIN* OFF?
WHAT A MESS.
THIS IS GOING TO MAKE THAT PLUNGER FIASCO LOOK LIKE A DAY AT THE BEACH. HOW COULD SOMETHIN' LIKE THIS HAPPEN?
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO GUESS.
QUEENS, NEW YORK.
HE WUZZA *SKA-TER BOY!* SHE SAID SEE YOU *LAT-ER BOY!* ♫ ♪
HE WASN'T GOOD ♫ E-NUFF FOR--
BRRNNG BRRNNG
CYAN! HUSH, HONEY! I'M ON THE PHONE.
meep
HELLO. THIS IS WANDA. YES... I'M SORRY, WHAT?

oh my god...

"SALVATION ROAD"

PART TWO

Spawn #122, cover

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY WOULD SOMEONE DO THIS?
WE'RE TRYING TO FIGURE THAT OUT, MA'AM. I KNOW THIS IS VERY UPSETTING FOR YOU. PLEASE, ACCEPT OUR SYMPATHIES.
WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS, MA'AM. IF YOU'RE UP TO IT, OF COURSE.
CAN YOU THINK OF A REASON SOMEONE WOULD WANT TO BREAK INTO YOUR *LATE HUSBAND'S GRAVE?*
WAS THERE ANYTHING OF VALUE BURIED WITH HIM? JEWELRY? PRIVATE PAPERS? ANYTHING AT ALL?
WHAT? NO. I MEAN... NOTHING I CAN...

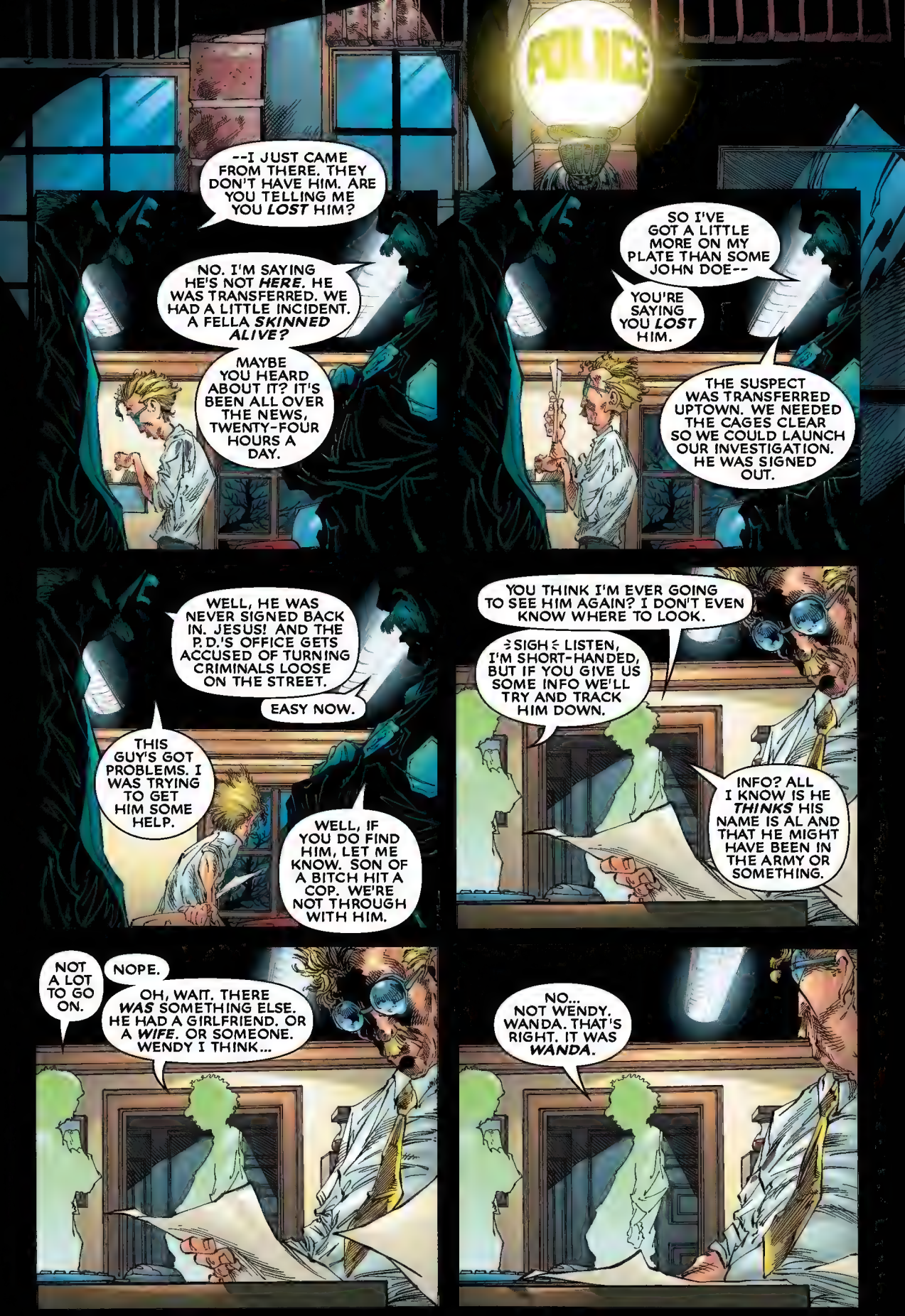
I CAN'T TAKE IT, TERRY. IT NEVER ENDS...
I KNOW, HONEY.
I KNOW.
The man with no shadow haunts my dreams...

This much I know: he appeared a couple nights ago. Cold. Lost. Terrified.
There is something *hunting* him. And it will find him, soon enough.
No man can run from his *shadow.*
Who he is, where he came from, these things have not been revealed to me. When the time comes, if necessary, I will consult my sisters.
But the truth is, it scarcely matters where he came from.
What matters is where he is going.

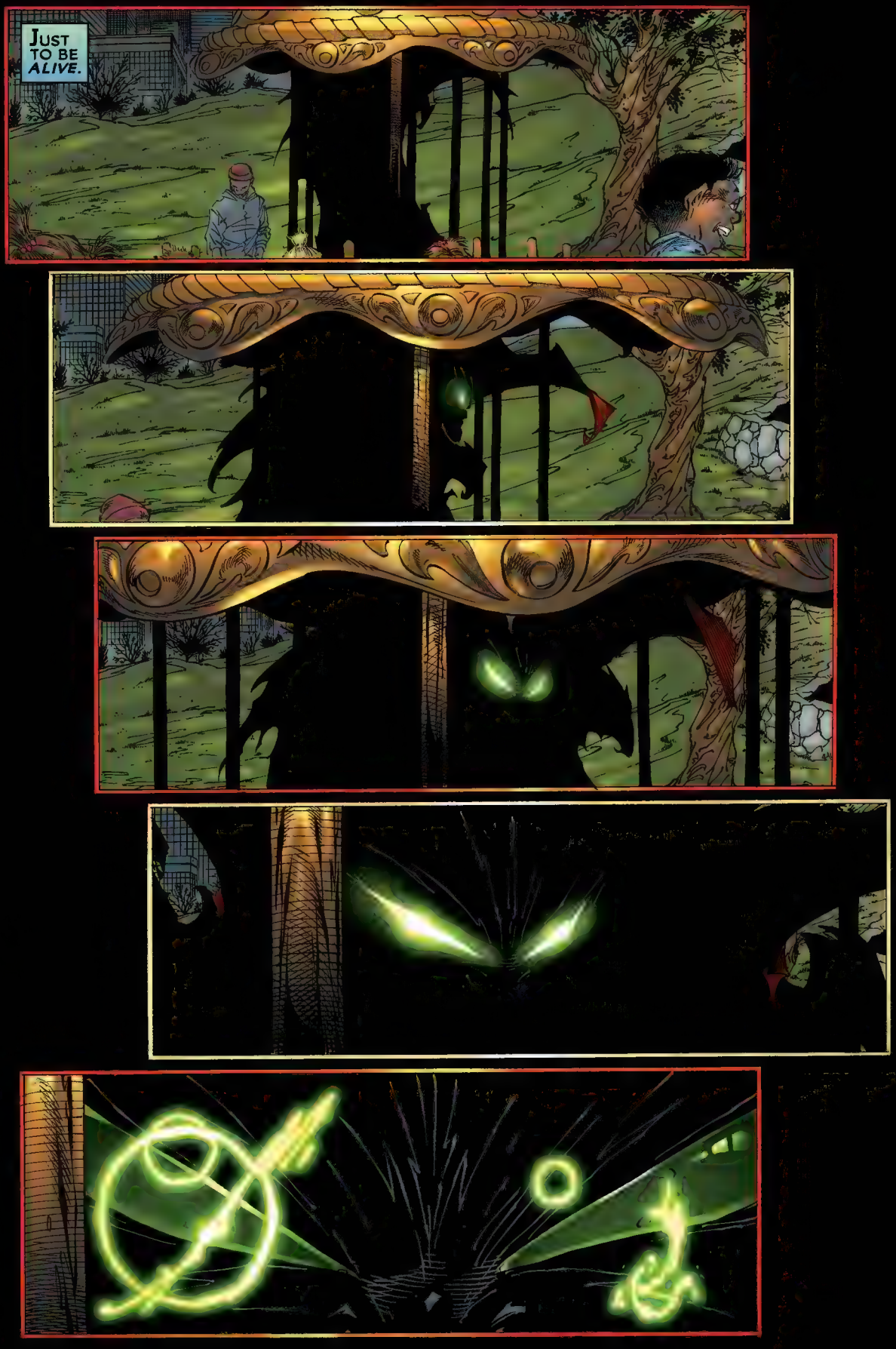
It's a tale as old as any. The lost pilgrim, stumbling through the darkness, beset by danger on all sides.
He walks the *Salvation Road*, the cutting edge of time and experience. The borderline that runs between what he was and what he will become.
He is an infant, reborn in some way or another. Everything is new to him. These first, delicate steps will be difficult.
Any misstep will cost him dearly.

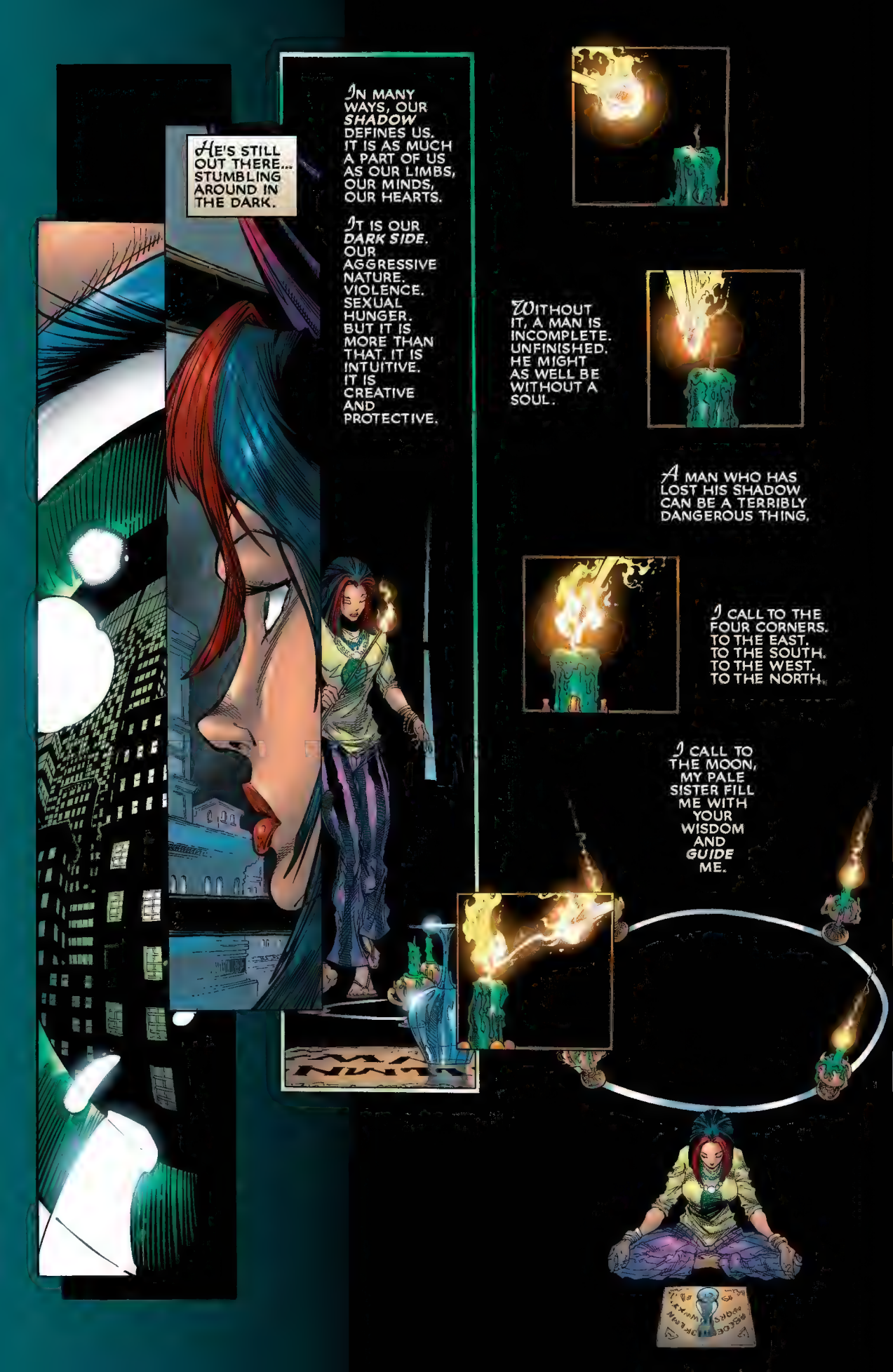
There is great magic at work here. I can feel it. It's in the air, skimming through the atmosphere like radio waves.
Powerful forces are choosing sides. He is the still and quiet center around which a terrible storm is gathering.
And he has no idea it's coming...

I CAN'T REMEMBER A THING. WHO I AM. WHERE I WAS BORN. I'M NOT EVEN SURE OF MY NAME.
EVERYTHING... THE SMELL OF GRASS... THE SOUND OF BIRDS... THE AIR IN MY LUNGS...
THE SUNLIGHT ON THE DUST FLOATING IN FRONT OF MY EYES...
IT'S ALL SO GOD DAMN *BEAUTIFUL.*
MAYBE I SHOULD BE WORRIED. BUT HOW CAN I BE?
I BELIEVE I AM THE *HAPPIEST MAN* IN THE *WORLD.*
IT'S SUCH A *PERFECT DAY.*


--I JUST CAME FROM THERE. THEY DON'T HAVE HIM. ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU *LOST* HIM?
NO. I'M SAYING HE'S NOT *HERE*. HE WAS TRANSFERRED. WE HAD A LITTLE INCIDENT. A FELLA *SKINNED ALIVE?*
MAYBE YOU HEARD ABOUT IT? IT'S BEEN ALL OVER THE NEWS, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY.
POLICE
SO I'VE GOT A LITTLE MORE ON MY PLATE THAN SOME JOHN DOE--
YOU'RE SAYING YOU *LOST* HIM.
THE SUSPECT WAS TRANSFERRED UPTOWN. WE NEEDED THE CAGES CLEAR SO WE COULD LAUNCH OUR INVESTIGATION. HE WAS SIGNED OUT.
WELL, HE WAS NEVER SIGNED BACK IN. JESUS! AND THE P.D.'S OFFICE GETS ACCUSED OF TURNING CRIMINALS LOOSE ON THE STREET.
EASY NOW.
THIS GUY'S GOT PROBLEMS. I WAS TRYING TO GET HIM SOME HELP.
WELL, IF YOU DO FIND HIM, LET ME KNOW. SON OF A BITCH HIT A COP. WE'RE NOT THROUGH WITH HIM.
YOU THINK I'M EVER GOING TO SEE HIM AGAIN? I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
≥SIGH≤ LISTEN, I'M SHORT-HANDED, BUT IF YOU GIVE US SOME INFO WE'LL TRY AND TRACK HIM DOWN.
INFO? ALL I KNOW IS HE *THINKS* HIS NAME IS AL AND THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN THE ARMY OR SOMETHING.
NOT A LOT TO GO ON.
NOPE.
OH, WAIT. THERE *WAS* SOMETHING ELSE. HE HAD A GIRLFRIEND. OR A *WIFE*. OR SOMEONE. WENDY I THINK...
NO... NOT WENDY. WANDA. THAT'S RIGHT. IT WAS *WANDA*.

A HALF-EMPTY BAG OF POPCORN. GOD KNOWS HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SITTING THERE.
I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW *HUNGRY* I WAS TILL JUST NOW.
IT'S OLD AND STALE AND SMELLS OF CHEMICALS.
IT'S SO *DELICIOUS* I COULD CRY.
LOOK AT THEM. THOSE LITTLE KIDS. SO INNOCENT. SO CAREFREE. THEY DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD THEY HAVE IT.
HOW LUCKY THEY ARE.
HOW LUCKY WE *ALL* ARE.


JUST TO BE ALIVE.


He's still out there... stumbling around in the dark.
In many ways, our *shadow* defines us. It is as much a part of us as our limbs, our minds, our hearts.
It is our *dark side*. Our aggressive nature. Violence. Sexual hunger. But it is more than that. It is intuitive. It is creative and protective.
Without it, a man is incomplete. Unfinished. He might as well be without a soul.
A man who has lost his shadow can be a terribly dangerous thing.
I call to the four corners. To the east. To the south. To the west. To the north.
I call to the moon, my pale sister fill me with your wisdom and *guide* me.

The path of the moon, from darkness into light and into darkness again, represents the path of man's soul on the karmic wheel.
Life. Death. Rebirth. The eternal circle.
The fool rises by fortune's hand until he becomes a king...
But as soon as he claims his throne, he is doomed... he falls, cast down from a great height... reborn into darkness to begin again as...

IF YOU'RE OUT THERE, I'M LISTENING.
HELLO?
IS THERE A PRESENCE?

IS THERE SOMEONE THERE?
OH...!

SUBTLE.

NIGHTTIME. I DON'T LIKE *DARK*.
SOMETHING TELLS ME I SPENT TOO MUCH OF MY LIFE IN THE *SHADOWS*.
WHERE AM I? WHY DID I COME HERE?
SOMETHING DREW ME. SOME FAINT GHOST OF MEMORY.
THIS PLACE... IT SMELLS LIKE *DEATH*.
I THINK THIS USED TO BE MY *HOME*.
HEY! LOOK WHO'S BACK!
HEY, AL. LONG TIME NO SEE.
YEAH. WHERE YOU BEEN, BUDDY?

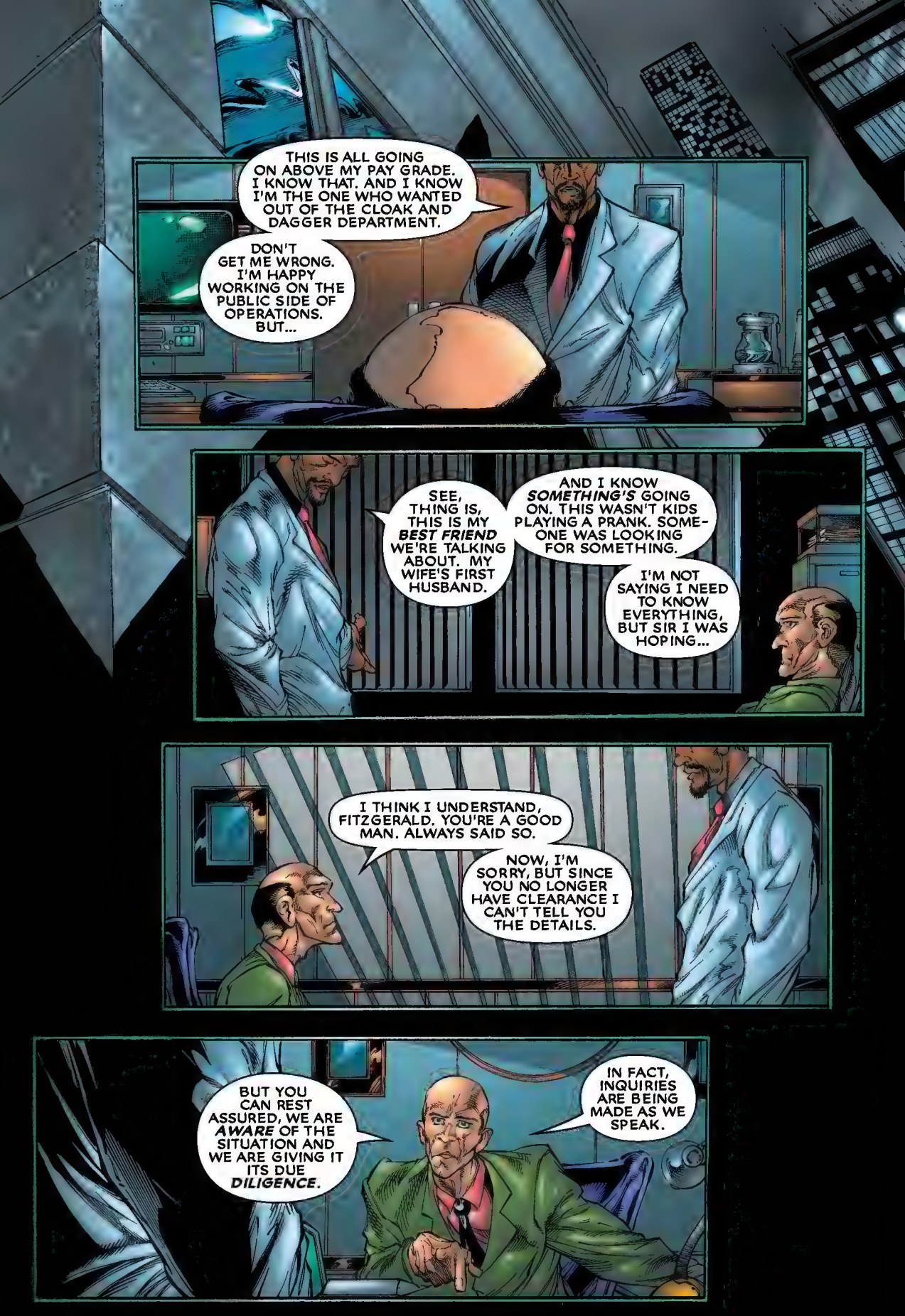
WHY'D YOU DO IT, AL? WHY'D YOU GO'N *LEAVE* US?
WHO ARE YOU? DO YOU KNOW ME?
DO YOU *KNOW WHO I AM?*
GONE...
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
LIKE *CHAINS*... SCRAPING AGAINST STONE...
THE DRUMMING OF A *HEARTBEAT.*

I THINK IT'S MINE.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

NO.
SOMEBODY! HELP ME!
HAH!
YOU CAN'T RUN FROM ME.

NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!
NOO!
LEAVE ME ALONE!

HUHN... HUHN...
HI. MY NAME IS NYX. I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.
STUR★BOX COFFEE

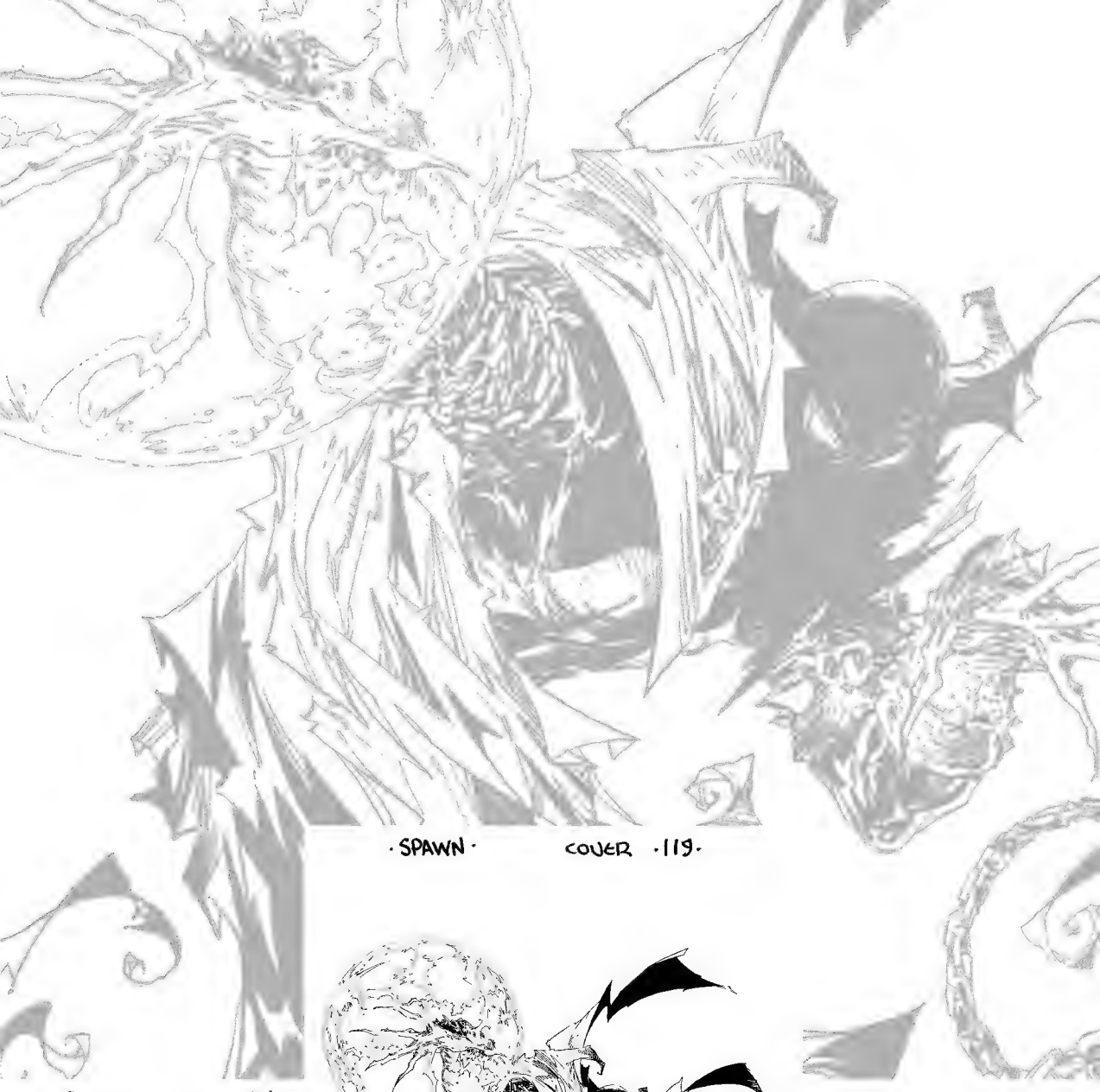

THIS IS ALL GOING ON ABOVE MY PAY GRADE. I KNOW THAT. AND I KNOW I'M THE ONE WHO WANTED OUT OF THE CLOAK AND DAGGER DEPARTMENT.
DON'T GET ME WRONG. I'M HAPPY WORKING ON THE PUBLIC SIDE OF OPERATIONS. BUT...
SEE, THING IS, THIS IS MY *BEST FRIEND* WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. MY WIFE'S FIRST HUSBAND.
AND I KNOW *SOMETHING'S* GOING ON. THIS WASN'T KIDS PLAYING A PRANK. SOMEONE WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.
I'M NOT SAYING I NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING, BUT SIR I WAS HOPING...
I THINK I UNDERSTAND, FITZGERALD. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. ALWAYS SAID SO.
NOW, I'M SORRY, BUT SINCE YOU NO LONGER HAVE CLEARANCE I CAN'T TELL YOU THE DETAILS.
BUT YOU CAN REST ASSURED, WE ARE *AWARE* OF THE SITUATION AND WE ARE GIVING IT ITS DUE *DILIGENCE*.
IN FACT, INQUIRIES ARE BEING MADE AS WE SPEAK.

SO WHAT YOU THINK THEY WANT WITH *HIM?*
I DUNNO. DUDE USED TO BE TOP DOG AROUND HERE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT. PROBABLY WANT TO PICK HIS BRAIN ABOUT SOME-THING.
RIGHT. WHAT'S *LEFT* OF IT...
MR. WYNN, COME WITH US PLEASE. THE BOYS UPSTAIRS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A CHAT WITH YOU.
SIMMONSSS...

ART GALLERY

Spawn #117, cover; inks

Spawn #118, cover; inks



Spawn #119, cover; inks

Spawn #120, cover; inks

Spawn #121, cover; pencils

Spawn #122, cover; inks

Spawn #118, page 5; inks

Spawn #118, page 19; inks

Spawn #120, page 21; inks

Spawn #121, page 16; inks

Spawn #122, page 17; inks

With *Spawn*, legendary writer and artist Todd McFarlane unleashed his iconic antihero on the world, and launched the most successful independent comic book in history.

Spawn is a hero unlike any other. A government agent, Al Simmons was killed by his own men. Resurrected from the depths of hell, he returns to Earth as the warrior Spawn, guarding the forgotten alleys of New York City. As he seeks answers about his past, Spawn grapples with the dark forces that returned him to Earth, battling enemies and discovering unlikely allies. As he learns to harness his extraordinary new powers, he begins to grasp the full extent of what brought him back – and what he left behind.

Spawn: Origins, Vol. 20 contains the stories and artwork that helped cement the *Spawn* legacy. Featuring hyper-detailed art by Angel Medina (*The Incredible Hulk, Sensational Spider-Man*), and stories by legendary *Spawn* scribe Brian Holguin with Todd McFarlane. Expect old favorites and new villains to collide in this exciting volume.

Each volume of the *Spawn: Origins* series includes six previously released, sold-out issues of *Spawn*, published in an all-new design and format. Exclusive bonus content includes cover galleries and behind-the-scenes art. Each volume also includes a classic *Spawn* cover re-imagined in a vibrant, new, digitally painted style.

This volume reprints *Spawn* issues 117-122.